

SONY PLAYSTATION • SEGA SATURN • NINTENDO 64 • NEO GEO • M2 • SNES

GAMEFAM

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 1997

WIN A MINI-ARCADE SYSTEM
IN SONY'S INCREDIBLE
SNK/PLAYSTATION
SWEEPSTAKES

MARIO KART 64

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

10

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SOULBLADE

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KI GOLD

SHADOWS OF
THE EMPIRE
CRUISIN' USA

SHOSHINKAI
SPECIAL REPORT

STARFOX 64

BLAST CORPS

ZELDA 64

YOSHI 64

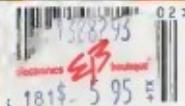
AND MORE!

PLUS:

DOOM 64

AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

WITH WILLIAMS MIDWAY!



5th ANNUAL MEGAWARDS!
INSIDE GF SPORTS: MADDEN '97 STRATEGY & NFL GAMEDAY '97
NINTENDO 64 SPORTS: NBA HANGTIME & ST. ANDREWS GOLF

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4-Players

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NINTENDO⁶⁴



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"Carnage runs rampant..."

★★★

— Next Generation

"[Kain's] plot is complex — and gory — enough to satisfy even the most die-hard RPG player."

— Electronic Gaming Monthly

"Kain is a powerful, persuasive and exciting new character..."

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Explore the carnage at www.activision.com or www.artsell.com.

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1. What are the names of the 2 "moods" of the character that will determine which set of moves you will have?
 2. What are the 2 animals that Nakoruru can fight with?
 3. What character can fight with an animal or without?
 4. What do characters gain in "UPPER GRADE" mode that makes up for the inability to defend?
 5. What word did the "Shodown" in Samurai Shodown III replace from the original name used in Japan?

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TO ENTER THE COMPETITION SIMPLY PRINT YOUR NAME, AGE AND ADDRESS (CITY, STATE AND ZIP) ON A POSTCARD ALONG WITH THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO AT LEAST 10 OF THE SNK TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND SEND IT TO:

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TOURNAMENT.
CIO LINZEE INTERNATIONAL
1506 OLD COUNTY ROAD.
BELMONT CA 94001

THE KING OF FIGHTERS' 95™

SONY



THE KING OF FIGHTERS® '95

1. Who is the male character that is shown on the cover of the game?
2. How many boss characters can be played in this game?
3. What 2 new characters made their debut in this game?
4. What was the name of the new feature added in the character selection that allows you to select any characters for your team?
5. The King of Fighters '95 takes characters who were originally from 4 different games. What are the names of those 4 games?

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY™

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY™

1. Are the characters Jin and Chin, male or female?
2. What is the name of the boss character that returns for this game?
3. How many lines of fighting are there?
4. What new feature allows characters to win with less power than the opponent?
5. Including Real Bout Fatal Fury, how many games in the Fatal Fury series exist?

[DIAGNOSIS] MIND BLOCK



SYMPTOMS :

- Uncontrollable compulsion to play Super Puzzle Fighter
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- Defeat friends repeatedly to relieve anxiety



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NEXT GENERATION
Oct. '96



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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. Mario⁶⁴ - Nintendo⁶⁴
2. Crash Bandicoot - PS
3. Resident Evil - PS
4. Tekken 2 - PS
5. Pilotwings - Nintendo⁶⁴
6. NiGHTS - Saturn
7. Final Fantasy III - SNES
8. WaveRace - Nintendo⁶⁴
9. Street Fighter Alpha - Saturn
10. Tobal No. 1 - PS



- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter - N ⁶⁴ | 6. Soul Edge - PS |
| 2. Shining the Holy Ark - Saturn | 7. Rage Racer - PS |
| 3. Fighters Megamix - Saturn | 8. Megaman 6 - PS |
| 4. Mario Kart 64 - N ⁶⁴ | 9. Re-Loaded - PS |
| 5. Shadows of the Empire - N ⁶⁴ | 10. Enemy Zero - Saturn |
| 1. Christmas NiGHTS - Saturn | 5. Command & Conquer - PS |
| 2. Shadows of the Empire - N ⁶⁴ | 7. Virtua Cop 2 - Saturn |
| 3. Mario Kart 64 - N ⁶⁴ | 8. Daytona CCE - Saturn |
| 4. Dark Savior - Saturn | 9. Rage Racer - PS |
| 5. Soul Edge - PS | 10. Super Mario Kart - Super NES |



READERS' MOST WANTED

1. Zelda - Nintendo⁶⁴
2. Resident Evil 2 - PS
3. Shadows of the Empire - N⁶⁴
4. Final Fantasy VII - PS
5. Tomb Raider - PS
6. Mario Kart 64 - N⁶⁴
7. Cruis'n USA - Nintendo⁶⁴
8. Doom - Nintendo⁶⁴
9. Donkey Kong Country 3 - SNES
10. Wayne Gretzky 3D Hockey - Nintendo⁶⁴



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Rage Racer - PS | 6. Tail of the Sun - PS |
| 2. Soul Edge - PS | 7. Command & Conquer - PS |
| 3. Yakuza 2 - PS | 8. Quake - PC |
| 4. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter - N ⁶⁴ | 9. Super Mario Kart - Super NES |
| 5. Doom ³ - N ⁶⁴ | 10. Tomb Raider - PC/PS |



- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6. Soul Edge - PS | 11. Tail of the Sun - PS |
| 7. Fighting Vipers - Saturn | 12. Command & Conquer - PS |
| 8. Tomb Raider - PS | 9. Virtua Cop 2 - Saturn |
| 10. Sakura Taisen - PS | 13. Final Fantasy VII - PS |



Congratulations

to last month's winners:

First Prize:

Lisa Golay, Columbus, OH

Second Prize:

Martins Wilhelms, Neer-Ulm, Germany

Third Prize:

José Miltuc, Red Bell, IL

WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard and send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clarendon Dr., Suite 210 Ageura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:
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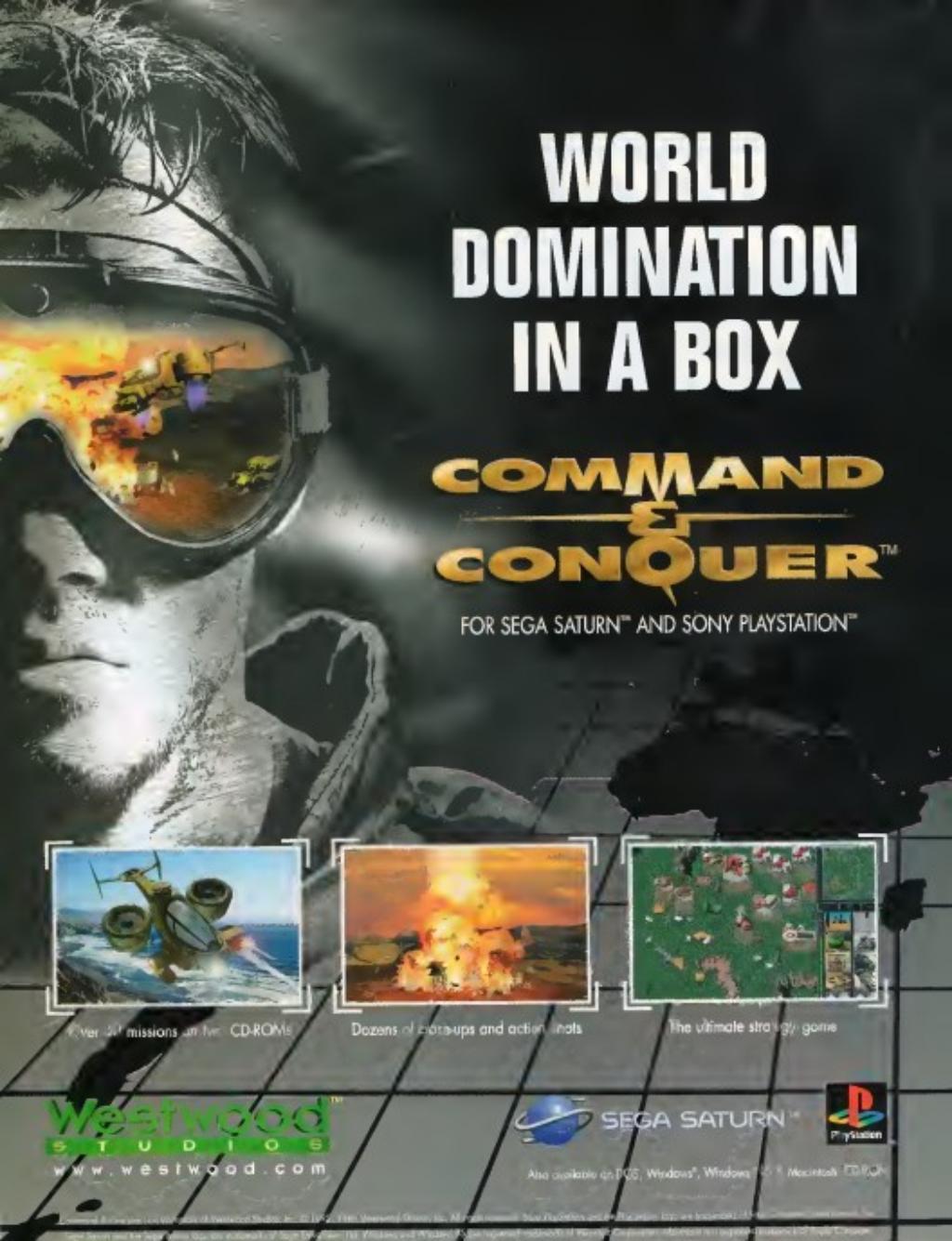
Second Prize:
Your choice of one of the Picks
of the Month in Viewpoint

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.



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Second Prize!

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FIRST PRIZE WINNER:

JONATHAN D. RACHELS - INTERNET

SECOND PRIZE WINNER:

J. SEAN MCKAY - INTERNET

THIRD PRIZE WINNER:

JAMES KING, FALLBROOK, CALIFORNIA

Waka and Chief Hambleton seek the finest cheats, search and tip known to humanity... and we need them from YOU!! We'll look over all the codes you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

SEND YOUR CODES AND LET'S GET TO IT!
Waka and Chief Hambleton

Hocus Pocus

5137 Clarendon Dr., Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

SAMURAI SHOWDOWN II

NEO-GEO CARTRIDGE - UNCENSORED CODE, EXTRA GOODIES!



First Reibus wanted to make a contribution. Now Shidoshi wants a piece of the action... Jeze people! I guess there will be an all-new Hocus coming your way soon!
See ya! - Waka & Chiot

Uncensor

At the main menu, hold Start, and go into the options screen. Move to exit, press A+B+C+D.

Fatality

While playing, press Back, Forward, Down + Start. Your character will kill himself/herself.

Name Entry

Putting in 'AAA' for your initials will make your character kill over dead.

Charlotte - Splash Gradation variation

While Charlotte is doing her Splash Gradation (weapon breaker), when she draws the star, hold A, B, C, or D. Each button will make her finish the move in a different way.

Galford - Poppy's puppies

Win two rounds perfectly, the second being weaponless. While Galford is doing his win pose, Poppy's puppies will run across the screen.

Shizuru - Seductive Neck Tearing

While weaponless, when time on the round is almost up, jump up into the air and create the ice platform below you. Time it so that you're still

standing on it when the time runs out. When Rimurura falls to the ground, before getting up, she'll lay on the ground for a second and look around.

Triglycerine

While weaponless, run at your opponent and press A+C or B+C.

Shizuru - Genjuro's frog

When Bust Shizuru hits Genjuro, in his second round win pose he will open his umbrella and Genjuro's frog from SS2 will hop out.

Mult-Image slash

For his deshing sword thrust, how long you hold the button determines what he does after the first hit. Variations come at 10, 30, 50, and 80 seconds. With the 80 second one, after his thrusts his sword into the opponent, he'll jump into the air, and multiple images of him will come down and hit the opponent.

Seigoku - Control Water Bubbles

After shooting out one of his water bubbles, keep the button you used held down, and using the joystick you can control the bubble slightly.



FORMULA ONE - SONY PLAYSTATION



BONUS TRACK

, BUGGY MODE, BIKE MODE, LAVA TRACK MODE, GIBBERISH MODE



To do these codes, you have to be at the PRACTICE, QUALIFY, and RACE screen. While pressing the following buttons hold SELECT.

BONUS TRACK - LEFT, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, UP, RIGHT.

MINI BUGGY MODE - RIGHT, UP, TRIANGLE, LEFT, UP, SQUARE, TRIANGLE.

MINI BIKE MODE - DOWN, UP, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, RIGHT, UP, SQUARE, TRIANGLE.

LAVA TRACK - SQUARE, CIRCLE, UP, RIGHT, RIGHT, CIRCLE, X.

GIBBERISH MODE - LEFT, CIRCLE, UP, DOWN, DOWN, RIGHT, CIRCLE, SQUARE, SQUARE



JOSEPH E. CIBELLO

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Do the codes at this screen while holding SELECT.

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Electronic Gaming Monthly

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advance to a higher level , I feel gamers will look
back to find this game at their roots"
Electronic Gaming Monthly

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J. SEAN MCKAY
jsmckay@enteract.com

Having trouble with the T-REX? Just input this code and enjoy the lovely carnage! While playing the game, simply press SELECT to bring up the inventory screen. Then enter, L1, TRIANGLE, R2, L2, L2, R2, CIRCLE, L1. If you do the code correctly, you will hear Lara make a lovely sound. Then just select the weapon of choice and blast away! (Input again to refill ammo.)



Those people at PSYGNOSIS have too much time on their hands! Check out these wacky and cool codes for WIPEOUT XL! Enjoy!

ANIMAL TEAMS: HOLD L1+R2+START+SELECT while the game is loading up. Voila!

CHALLENGE MODE: Enter the following in the OPTIONS menu.

CHALLENGE 1: Press SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE.

CHALLENGE 2: Press SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, CIRCLE, CIRCLE.

PIRANHA TEAM: To access the PIRANHA TEAM, HOLD L1+R1+SELECT at the MAIN MENU.

Then, while holding these buttons down, press X, X, X, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE.

PHANTOM CLASS: Repeat PIRANHA TEAM code...

ALL EIGHT TRACKS: Repeat PIRANHA TEAM code...

MACHINE GUN: To refill your vehicle with machine guns, PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. With these buttons held down, press SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, TRIANGLE.

INFINITE ENERGY: For unlimited energy, PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. While holding these buttons, press TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE.

INFINITE WEAPONS: For unlimited firepower (OH-YEAH!), PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. While holding these buttons, press X, SQUARE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE.

INFINITE TIME: Slow down and enjoy the scenery with this code! For unlimited time, PAUSE the game and HOLD L1+R1+SELECT. And again, while holding the buttons, press TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X.

JAMES KING
FALLBROOK, CALIFORNIA



What CONTRA game would be complete without codes? Enter all of these codes at the TITLE SCREEN, and enjoy!

BAMBOO ARCADE: R2, R1, RIGHT, LEFT, L1 AND L2.

BAMBOO GYROS: L2, L1, LEFT, RIGHT, R1 AND R2.

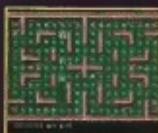
UNLIMITED CONTINUES: L2, R2, L1, R1, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT.

WEAPON SELECT: L2, R2, L1, L2, UP, DOWN, DOWN, UP.

SFX BROWSER: R2, R1, L1, L2, UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT.

MOVIE PLAYER: L2, L1, R1, R2, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT.

DCCooper7@aol.com





MEGA MAN MEGA MYTH MEGA LEGEND

THE BLUE BOMBER'S BACK.



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This code hails to us from Jonathan D. Rachels. Good Job! We're pretty sure everyone out there will have fun playing with these hilarious codes! The Sega Nomad is on its way!

Input these codes in the **PASSWORD SCREEN**:

TWISTEYE: - Hold L1 and L2 and move the D-pad left or right to rotate the screen. Press DOWN to center it again.

THETHING: - Hold L2 and press the CIRCLE button to change shapes. X swaps back to normal shape.

HARDBODY: - "Invincibility"

BODYSWAP: - Press TRIANGLE to change players during mid-game.

OTTOFIRE: - Permanent Weapon

VITAMINS: - 31 Lives!

CORONARY: - Loads of extra hearts.

BORNFREE: - Go to any level.

TOMMYBOY: - The pinball game. Finish a level and go to the OPTION to play this.

CADASH: - Bonus level after every level of the game is finished.



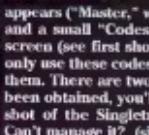
JONATHAN D. RACHELS

beckrach@juno.com



THE REUBUS REPORT PRESENTS

Jet Moto



So who's up to the challenge of this incredibly tough racer? Rebus, that's who! Beat the game on Professional level and you're a true gamer (like me)! After that, you will be presented with a shot of your character, and then one of your whole team, along with one of nine codes. Also, a new difficulty level appears ("Master," which I've also beaten numerous times), and a small "Codes Enabled" balloon appears at the title screen (see first shot, first row). Yup, that's right: You can only use these codes *after* you've beaten the game *without* them. There are two codes per team, and when these have been obtained, you'll get the ninth, accompanied by a nifty shot of the Singletrac team (see last shot, second row). Can't manage it? (sigh...) Well, we can't *all* be me...

TEAM

CODE TO ENABLE

ENTER AT "CODES ENABLED" SCREEN

REBUS

AGILITY



ROCKET RACER



SINGLETRAK

DOUBLE STUNT POINTS



ZERO RESISTANCE



MOTORHEAD

SHOW-OFF CAMERS



AIR BRAKES



CLIFFDIVER

UNLIMITED TURBOS



ICE RACING MODE



GLITCH

2-PLAYER AI



Here's a couple o' tips that will help to defeat Jet Moto on Professional the first time around. While Blackwater Falls presents little trouble at the easier settings, I found myself having great difficulty with it at the Pro level. That is, until I found this sweet little shortcut through the plantation house's main hallway. The actual distance saved ain't much, but the time saved is just enough to completely out-distance the competition. Also, the skilled among you can turbo across the last two switchbacks on the Cliffdiver course, a definite time-saver in another of the tougher tracks, but not easy to pull off...



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**COMMAND & CONQUER
PLAYVENTION
VIRGIN
STRATEGY**



**SOUL BLADE
PLAYSTATION
NAMCO
FIGHTING**



**DIE HARD TRILOGY
SATURN
FOX
MULTI-GENRE**



**HARDCORE 4 X 4
SATURN
ASC
RACING**



**CHRISTMAS NIGHTS
SATURN
SEGA
ALTERNATIVE**



**DARK SAVIOR
SATURN
CLIMAX
ACTION/RPG**



My favorite action/strategy title at all time finally makes it to the PS, and it's a superb conversion!

The real-time resource management and puzzle-inducing battles are as enjoyable as ever, only now you can do them in the comfort of a sofa.

The PS version has extra missions and closer FMV than the Saturn version, but no extra setting options. C&C is a strategy game for people who don't normally like strategy games. One question though: where's the up-side mode?

G C P M O 93

After Star Blaster in *Star Fox 2*, I thought we were safe. Could we ever get any better? Can the DS play grander? This minute I find myself on Star Edge with questions unanswered. You can move and fight without deep game play, lighting effects from the gods, over 40 weapons, hidden characters and awesome music. If you want what you have... yet nothing else, FS is the game for you. There's no need to wonder if it's possible. Star Edge is a winner. A big winner!

G C P M O 98

Next to *Shadow of the Beast*, this is the only game that succeeds in putting three different game engines together, and making them all fit to stay. The graphics are not quite as sharp as the PS version, but the multiplay is excellent. The best part is that you have (and their gear for half missions) is that when you beat any at the DH games, you have to go back to the DH screen and start a new game again - it doesn't just start you off on the next game (movie) automatically.

G C P M O 75

Hardcore's just not the same on the Saturn. It's been said it once. I've said it a million times: 3D pay-on-head games that come from the PlayStation to the Saturn will always stay disappointing. The lack of three-dimensionality in this version is a blinding disappointment and the absence of lighting/EF take much from the PS game's graphic appeal. Hardcore's still a good racer, but once again it belongs on the PlayStation.

G C P M O 65

I'm saving SN for last for two reasons. First, because I feel it's an excellent product. The new look is majestic, the graphics are as fluid as ever, and the controls are as refined as ever. You're bound to love the game, the Sega license act as an independent companion to regular AVGN's. Because, at what it represents: an unexpanded SN, with a few more levels, and a few more bosses. Talk about value for money - it's brilliant. And finally, because SN makes me smile more than any game I've ever played. I love this game and you must get it - it's that simple.

G C P M O 96

Though I find some of the science questionable, *Dark Savior* is without a doubt a must-have game for every Saturn user. Climax's 3D engine is phenomenal and with 5 parallel game levels forever, the CG that awaits should you complete all five is splendid. DS isn't the game *Landskater* was, but it comes close enough for me to love it.

G C P M O 88

Who'da thought that strategy could be such a blast? Detailed graphics, great AI, intense gameplay make C&C a thinking man's shoot-'em-up. It doesn't matter what version you choose, get ready for hours of tactical genius and warlike destruction. Herae, violence, deep, deep gameplay and some of the most impressive FMV this side of *Narco* - C&C looks less and takes more!

G C P M O 91

After what must rank as the most spectacular SN titles of all time, *Star Blaster* is a solid entry. The graphics are solid, the weapons are plentiful, but doesn't go any further than the cockpit. It blows off a lot of the weird, instinctive, grabby, gaminess, awesome period music, shooting backgrounds, new weapons, new characters, the incredible Edge Master Mode and some of the most spectacular game endings ever created (not that *Metroid Prime* isn't). If you're a SN fan, you're going to be in heaven with this *Star Blaster* refit.

G C P M O 96

This makes me very sad. The Saturn C&C looks a grown like this. Unfortunately, the programmers couldn't handle the Saturn. The game itself is still really cool, content-wise, but a poor frame rate transforms some levelling up into experiences (especially in the crawler). You can't even see the textures, the sound effects, and the various loads quickly, but the game just moves along at truly painful speeds sometimes. Personally, I'll stick with the PS version.

G C P M O 68

Another tragic PS to Saturn conversion. Why? Simply stated: a good game in Saturn colors could look damn good in the colors of the Saturn. There's a ton of trucks and tracks, extremely realistic play mechanics, and the computer AI is pretty good, but do you really need to play this version? The frame rate is appalling, the clipping makes you feel like you're driving blind, and the voice-over sounds muffled. If the Saturn's having trouble, it's because of games like this.

G C P M O 52

Isn't this game amazing? Knightsbridge and I are like two little kids on Christmas morning. Look, this game costs you little or nothing. It includes three levels, enhanced graphics, and countless hidden treasures. You can even design your own levels. There's in Seaside, there's in the city, there's in high-rail artwork, incredible playability, and you have yourself a very happy Christmas. Thanks Yuji, and thank you Sega, it's good to see that you're on our side.

G C P M O 97

Sorry, *Avatar/RPG* (even with the SN ported) are a bit thin on the ground right now. It's got its to save game, the *Dark Sector* expansion, the luminous graphics system (twinkling polygons and particles work well), particularly with the reading part, and I think the way Climax has structured the game to include equal parts action and adventure. Even though the combat system is kind of lame, having planned story missions, and some nice, well-told set of missions to an otherwise impressive game. A worthy successor to *Landskater*.

G C P M O 92

What's needed for games? New strategy fans have another reason to rejoice: a perfect conversion of a horribly tedious PC classic, with everything intact, loads of them and they're really cool (intended) ways destroying loads of other things. The intro? A friendly soldier salutes you with honor and the building of traps (surviving traps) into enemy territory to let you invade it's first desperate stage. Excellent sound of your troops coupled with a vast array of military hardware to play with ensure the *C&C* kids less and takes more!

G C P M O 96

Knock has really outdone themselves this time around. If you get a better version of the arcade conversion, you'll be able to move more options up, but there's the intense Edge Master mode which looks like you're in a very, very bad place. You're to become the master of the edge, and by playing it you're granted a choice of over 800 weapons in two-player mode! Add in this a solid and well-balanced game of survival, involving 800 breakdowns and an excellent level editor, and you've got a game that's both fun and challenging, and lots of fun. And lots of fun, especially the enjoyment and joy of the destruction. The time spent by the developers in the world has clearly paid off, so power should be without fear, the wood

G C P M O 98

Die Hard Trilogy is exactly how you'd expect a Saturn conversion to be... well, it's not the same (pretty cool) but the textures are messier, the transitions are messier, the transitions are messier, the textures are messier, there's an annoying flare, and the frame rate is appallingly low in places (especially on *Die Hard 2*). If you really want a *Die Hard* game, my advice to you is get a PS or wait for *Die Hard Arcade*.

G C P M O 70

Hardcore 4x4 is exactly how you'd expect a Saturn conversion of a PS game to be... less. Well! *Diego Val*? That's right, Saturn fans, once again a perfectly good PS game has become a perfectly crud Saturn doorstop. The controls are broken, the visuals are jerky, and the whole thing smells like Jacques' strap. I know it's tough to convert a PS game to Saturn, but if the results are this bad, why bother?

G C P M O 60

You're sitting there, playing *Aladdin* SN, and you have to keep reminding yourself that you're playing a FREE game, because there is just no menu included in this disc. Beyond the constantly-changing and generally terrible control level, you get things like the ability to play Sonic, a lone bird and attack, music selection, and a few other things. I actually liked the Christmas theme better than this abomination. *Diego Val*? It's a masterpiece or a genuine gift from Sega. This is one of the coolest things to come along, both in the game field and symbolically.

G C P M O 91

Such a cool game. The 3D engine is not the play-mechanics are great. Completing all five levels is no small task, but getting there - especially when you're constantly targeted and pelted with rocks and the like - is a mission trip indeed. I'll acknowledge that the fighting system is kinda low budget, but when coupled with the wealth of gameplay on your disposal, you'll forgive, forget, and quest onward with a smile. Climax rewards the faithful with yet another example of awesome action-role-playing.

G C P M O 92



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GameFan



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ASCII
ENTERTAINMENT

THE 5TH ANNUAL GAMEFAN MEGAWARDS



E. STORM TAKUHI ORION NICK ROX C. HAMBLETON ENQUIRER REUBUS SNOOKSI GLITCH KNIGHTMARE WAKA

ACTION/PLATFORM

E. Storm 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Takuchi 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Runner Up: The Adv. of Lomax

Orion 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Runner Up: The Adv. of Lomax

Nick Rox 1st: The Adv. of Lomax
Runner Up: Crash Bandicoot

C. Hambleton 1st: Jumping Flash! 2
Runner Up: Crash Bandicoot

Enquirer 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Runner Up: Jumping Flash! 2

Reubus 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Runner Up: Jumping Flash! 2

Snooksi 1st: Pandemonium
Runner Up: Crash Bandicoot

Glitch 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Runner Up: The Adv. of Lomax

Knightmare 1st: Crash Bandicoot
Runner Up: Pandemonium

Waka 1st: Pandemonium
Runner Up: Crash Bandicoot

ACTION/PLATFORM GAME OF THE YEAR: CRASH BANDICOOT
Runner Up: PANDEMONIUM

ACTION/ADVENTURE

E. Storm 1st: Super Mario 64
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

Takuchi 1st: Resident Evil
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

Orion 1st: Tomb Raider (PS)
Runner Up: Resident Evil

Nick Rox 1st: Resident Evil
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

C. Hambleton 1st: Super Mario 64
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

Enquirer 1st: Super Mario 64
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

Reubus 1st: Tomb Raider (PS)
Runner Up: Super Mario 64

Snooksi 1st: Resident Evil
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

Glitch 1st: Tomb Raider (PS)
Runner Up: Super Mario 64

Knightmare 1st: Super Mario 64
Runner Up: Tomb Raider (PS)

Waka 1st: Tomb Raider (PS)
Runner Up: Resident Evil

ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR: TOMB RAIDER (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: SUPER MARIO 64

ACTION/ROLE PLAYING

E. Storm 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Takuchi 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Legacy of Kain

Orion 1st: Legacy of Kain
Runner Up: Beyond Oasis

Nick Rox 1st: Beyond Oasis
Clet Hambleton 1st: Kings Field 2
Runner Up: Legacy of Kain

Enquirer 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Reubus 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Snooksi 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Glitch 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Knightmare 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Waka 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

ACTION/ROLE PLAYING GAME OF THE YEAR: BEYOND OASIS

Runner Up: VIRTUA COP 2

ACTION/RPG GAME OF THE YEAR: BEYOND OASIS

Runner Up: LEGACY OF KAIN

ENIGMA

Enquirer 1st: Legacy of Kain
Runner Up: Beyond Oasis

Reubus 1st: Legacy of Kain
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Snooksi 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Glitch 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Knightmare 1st: Beyond Oasis
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Waka 1st: Legacy of Kain
Runner Up: Beyond Oasis

ACTION/RPG GAME OF THE YEAR: BEYOND OASIS

COORRIDOR

E. Storm 1st: PowerSlave
Runner Up: Tekka

Takuchi 1st: Powerslave
Runner Up: Final Doom

Orion 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: PowerSlave

Nick Rox 1st: PowerSlave
Runner Up: Final Doom

C. Hambleton 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: PowerSlave

Enquirer 1st: PowerSlave
Runner Up: Final Doom

Reubus 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: PowerSlave

Snooksi 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: PowerSlave

Glitch 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: PowerSlave

Knightmare 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: Tekka

Waka 1st: Final Doom
Runner Up: PowerSlave

COORRIDOR GAME OF THE YEAR: POWERSLAVE (SATURN)
Runner Up: FINAL DOOM

SHOOTING

E. Storm 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Galaga

Takuchi 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Orion 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Nick Rox 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

C. Hambleton 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Enquirer 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Dark Savior

Reubus 1st: Robotron X
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Snooksi 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Glitch 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Knightmare 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

Waka 1st: Phazer Zwei
Runner Up: Virtua Cop 2

SHOOTING GAME OF THE YEAR: PHAZER ZWEI

Runner Up: VIRTUA COP 2

FIGHTING

E. Storm 1st: Fighting Vipers
Runner Up: KI Gold

Takuchi 1st: Fighting Vipers
Runner Up: KOF '98 (Saturn)

Orion 1st: Final Tekken 2
Runner Up: SF Alpha 2 (Saturn)

Nick Rox 1st: SF Alpha 2
Runner Up: Tekken 2

C. Hambleton 1st: Tekken 2
Runner Up: SF Alpha 2 (Saturn)

Enquirer 1st: SF Alpha 2 (Saturn)
Runner Up: KI Gold

Reubus 1st: SF Alpha 2 (PS)
Runner Up: Tekken 2

Snooksi 1st: Samurai Showdown 4
Runner Up: KOF '96

Glitch 1st: SF Alpha 2
Runner Up: Tekken 2

Knightmare 1st: Fighting Vipers
Runner Up: Virtua On

Waka 1st: Tekken 2
Runner Up: Fighting Vipers

FIGHTING GAME OF THE YEAR: STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2 (SATURN)
Runner Up: FIGHTING VIPERS

RACING/SIMULATION

E. Storm 1st: WaveRace 64
Runner Up: Jet Moto

Orion 1st: Ridge Racer Rev.
Runner Up: Ridge Racer Rev.

Nick Rox 1st: Ridge Racer Rev.
Runner Up: Formula 1

C. Hambleton 1st: Ridge Racer Rev.
Runner Up: WaveRace 64

Enquirer 1st: WaveRace 64
Runner Up: Ridge Racer Rev.

Reubus 1st: Jet Moto
Runner Up: Ridge Racer Rev.

Snooksi 1st: Formula 1
Runner Up: Ridge Racer Rev.

Glitch 1st: WaveRace 64
Runner Up: Daytona CCE

Knightmare 1st: Daytona CCE
Runner Up: WaveRace 64

Waka 1st: Ridge Racer Rev.
Runner Up: WaveRace 64

RACING/SIMULATION GAME OF THE YEAR: RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION/WAVERACE (N64)
Runner Up: DAYTONA CCE & F1

RACING/COMBAT

E. Storm 1st: Wipeout (Saturn)
Runner Up: Motor Toon GP 2

Takuchi 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Orion 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Nick Rox 1st: Wipeout GP 2
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

C. Hambleton 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Enquirer 1st: Wipeout GP 2
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Reubus 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Snooksi 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Glitch 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Knightmare 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Waka 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Motor Toon GP 2

We play games everyday, all year, and then, finally, it comes down to this. Eleven video game addicts petitioning for their top games like a pack of crazed lobbyists. Here's how it all shaped up for 1996...

ACTING

Nick Rox 1st: Motor Toon GP 2
Runner Up: Wipeout XL

C. Hambleton 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Enquirer 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Motor Toon GP 2

Reubus 1st: Wipeout (Saturn)

Snooksi 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Glitch 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Knightmare 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Wipeout (Saturn)

Waka 1st: Wipeout XL
Runner Up: Motor Toon GP 2

RACING/COMBAT GAME OF THE YEAR: WIPEROOT XL (PLAYSTATION)
Runner Up: MOTOR TOON GP/WIPEOUT SATURDAY (N64)

PUZZLE

E. Storm 1st: Puzzle Fighter
Runner Up: Boku Boku Animal

Takuchi 1st: Bust a Move 2
Runner Up: Boku Boku Animal

Nick Rox 1st: Bust a Move 2
Runner Up: Bust a Move 2

Reubus 1st: Bust a Move 2
Runner Up: Bust a Move 2

Snooksi 1st: Bust a Move 2
Runner Up: Bust a Move 2

Glitch 1st: Bust a Move 2
Runner Up: Bust a Move 2

Knightmare 1st: Boku Boku Animal
Runner Up: Bust a Move 2

Waka 1st: Bust a Move 2
Runner Up: Bust a Move 2

PUZZLE GAME OF THE YEAR: TETRIS ATTACK (SUPER NES)

Runner Up: PUZZLE FIGHTER

ROLE-PLAYING

E. Storm 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Takuchi 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Persona

Nick Rox 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

C. Hambleton 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Enquirer 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Reubus 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Snooksi 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Glitch 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Knightmare 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG

Waka 1st: Suikoden
Runner Up: Mario RPG



SOUNDTRACK

- E. Storm 1st: *Guardian Heroes*
 Takuhi Runner Up: *Sonic Blast*
 Orion 1st: *Saiyokuden*
 Runner Up: *Panzer zwei*
 Orion 1st: *Saiyokuden*
 Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
 Nick Rox 1st: *Saiyokuden*
 Runner Up: *Tekken No. 1*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
 Enquirer 1st: *Wipeout XL*
 Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
 Rebus 1st: *Jet Moto*
 Runner Up: *Wipeout XL*
 Shiodshi 1st: *Samurai Showdown 4*
 Runner Up: *Saiyokuden*
 Glitch 1st: *NIGHTS*
 Runner Up: *Sonic Blast*
 Knightmare 1st: *NIGHTS*
 Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
 Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Saiyokuden*
- BEST SOUNDTRACK OF THE YEAR:**
SAIYOKUDEN (PLAYSTATION)
 Runner Up: *TEKKEN 2*

BEST USE OF CG/VM

- E. Storm 1st: *Tomb Raider*
 Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
 Takuhi 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Guardian Heroes*
 Orion 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Nick Rox 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Tekken No. 1*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
 Enquirer 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Rebus 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Pandemonium*
 Shiodshi 1st: *Pandemonium*
 Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
 Glitch 1st: *NIGHTS*
 Runner Up: *Virtua Fighter Kids*
 Knightmare 1st: *NIGHTS*
 Runner Up: *Tekken 2*
 Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Legacy of Kain*
- REST USE OF FMV/CG OF THE YEAR:**
TEKKEN 2 (PLAYSTATION)
 Runner Up: *LEGACY OF KAIN*

SPORTS

- E. Storm 1st: *CoolBoarders*
 Runner Up: *In the Zone 2*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *WW Soccer 97*
 Runner Up: *CoolBoarders*
 Enquirer 1st: *Power Move Wrestling*
 Runner Up: *Madden 97*
 Rebus 1st: *CoolBoarders*
 Runner Up: *V Tennis*
 Shiodshi 1st: *Ten Pin Alley*
 Runner Up: *WW Soccer 97*
 Glitch 1st: *Madden 97*
 Runner Up: *WW Soccer 97*
 Knightmare 1st: *WW Soccer 97*
 Runner Up: *Madden 97*
 Waka 1st: *CoolBoarders*
 Runner Up: *Power Move Wrestling*
- BEST SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR:**
WORLD WIDE SOCCER '97 (SATURN)
 Runner Up: *COOLBOARDERS*

IMPORT (games not scheduled for US release only)

- E. Storm 1st: *Enemy Zero*
 Runner Up: *Kefu Yu Geikita*
 Takuhi 1st: *Enemy Zero*
 Runner Up: *Treasure Hunter G*

- Nick Rox 1st: *Enemy Zero*
 Runner Up: *Nenomura Ryuu no Mikabu*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *Wipeout G*
 Runner Up: *Treasure Hunter G*
 Enquirer 1st: *Enemy Zero*
 Runner Up: *Sexy Parodies*
 Rebus 1st: *Chore G*
 Runner Up: *Smash Court*
 Shiodshi 1st: *Princess Maker 2*
 Runner Up: *Wander Project J2*
 Glitch 1st: *Kefu Yu Geikita*
 Runner Up: *Ozmaion Plus*
 Knightmare 1st: *Enemy Zero*
 Runner Up: *Incredible Toons*
 Waka 1st: *Dragon Ball Z Legends (PS)*
 Runner Up: *Twilight Syndrome*
- BEST IMPORT ONLY GAME OF THE YEAR: ENEMY ZERO**
 Runner Up: *KEFU YU GEIKITA*

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

- E. Storm 1st: *Demise of Virtual Boy*
 Runner Up: *Yufu Makai making NIGHTS instead of a 32-bit Sonic*
 Takuhi 1st: *Numerous Super NES games lost forever in Japan*
 Runner Up: *Nintendo 64 launch*
 Nick Rox 1st: *Numerous SNES games lost forever in Japan*
 Runner Up: *Lack of 2D games*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *Numerous SNES capabilities*
 Runner Up: *Saturn Olayzona CCE 3D pop-up*
 Enquirer 1st: *Only eight games for N64*
 Runner Up: *No MZ this year*
 Rebus 1st: *VH1 delayed VMX*
 Runner Up: *N64 game delays*
 Glitch 1st: *No Phantasy Star*
 Runner Up: *No Bare Knuckle*
 Knightmare 1st: *Lack of N64 software*
 Runner Up: *No one but me (sob!) understood NIGHTS*
 Waka 1st: *FFVII pushed back a month*
 Runner Up: *Lack of PS peripherals*

HIGH POINT OF THE YEAR

- E. Storm 1st: *The Nintendo 64!!!*
 Runner Up: *The Sony PS giving me a year to remember!*
 Takuhi 1st: *FFVII comes to the PlayStation*
 Runner Up: *Not Saturn Model 2 translations*
 Nick Rox 1st: *Street Fighter 3 is 200!*
 Runner Up: *Capcom rules!*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *Namco PlayStation conversions*
 Runner Up: *Nintendo 64 launch*
 Enquirer 1st: *Nintendo 64 launch*
 Runner Up: *Now shockingly good Tomb Raider is*
 Rebus 1st: *Nintendo 64 launch*
 Runner Up: *Beating Jet Moto (without codes)*
 Shiodshi 1st: *SNA gave me back Charlotte*
 Runner Up: *Sony's change of attitude*
 Glitch 1st: *N64 delivers true 3D*
 Runner Up: *Sega's X-Mas Nights giveaway*
 Dan 1st: *Super Mario 64 showed the way*
 Runner Up: *Not Saturn Model 2 translations*
 Waka 1st: *FFVII demo diversifying*

GAME OF THE YEAR 1996

- E. Storm 1st: *Tomb Raider*
 Runner Up: *Super Mario 64*
 Takuhi 1st: *Resident Evil*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Orion 1st: *Resident Evil*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Nick Rox 1st: *Resident Evil*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 C. Hambleton 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Ridge Racer Rev.*
 Enquirer 1st: *Super Mario 64*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Rebus 1st: *Super Mario 64*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Shiodshi 1st: *Resident Evil*
 Runner Up: *Samurai Showdown 4*
 Glitch 1st: *NIGHTS*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*
 Knightmare 1st: *NIGHTS*
 Runner Up: *Mario 64*
 Waka 1st: *Tekken 2*
 Runner Up: *Tomb Raider*

THE TOP FIVE GAMEFAN GAMES OF 1996

1. *TOMB RAIDER*
2. *RESIDENT EVIL*
3. *SUPER MARIO 64*
4. *NIGHTS*
5. *TEKKEN 2*

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CONGRATULATIONS!

As we closed this year's awards, many great games came in that we were dying to throw into the mix that either haven't been released over here yet, or are due next year. Look for them in the 1997 Megawards. Here they are so you know what to keep an eye out for early on in '97: *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* (N64), *Shining the Holy Ark* (Saturn), *Mario Kart 64* (N64), *Soul Edge* (PS) and *Fighters Megamix* (Saturn). The way things are going, 1997 should be another year packed with non-stop entertainment.

JUST A FEW OF THIS YEAR'S MEGAWARDS WINNERS...



SUPER MARIO 64



CRASH BANDICOOT



GUARDIAN HEROES



POWERSLAVE



WAVERACE



SUIKODEN



VIRTUA FIGHTER 3



WIPEOUT XL



SF ALPHA 2



TEKKEN 2



NIGHTS



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PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS OF:



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"Disruptor looks capable of stomping lesser games with a huge biomechanical boot!"

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EDITOR'S YEAR IN REVIEW

After twelve months that flew by like 6, here's what some of GameFan's most prominent editors had to say about one of gaming's hottest and most eventful years...

I had more fun this year than should be legal. The race for next-gen supremacy between Sony and Sega resulted in a steady flow of quality software. I'm hard pressed to remember a day in '96 when I didn't have something to play. The dry spells that plagued sixteen-bit seem all but extinct, and shamelessly bad games are at an all-time low. Sure, we had our pigs, but the pen wasn't nearly as tall as it's been in the past.

Early on I had concerns in regards to the action-platform and adventure platforms. Unwilling to part with the conventional schema (hand drawn-like scrollflag), the whole 3D thing had me worried. How would companies capture the complexity, personality, and accurate gameplay in a polygonal environment? My fears have been laid to rest however as Super Mario 64, Crash Bandicoot, and Tomb Raider answered all of those questions. These titles being first generation I look forward with burning anticipation to '97's sequels and new 16-bit titles. Not that I'm about to surrender 2D, no way. Castlevania 4 and Mana 8 are among my most eagerly anticipated future titles and Clockwork Kayo 2 and Romancing SaGa 2 were among my favorite games in the past year. '96 saw every genre represented. Racing, Role Playing, Shooting, Action/Role Playing, and 3D corridor were all covered, some beyond my expectations. I entered '96 with apprehension and emerged more enthused and optimistic than I've ever been about video games. 1997 is

This has been the most exciting year in video game history. The reasons? Well, let's start with the advent of the new video game world order for starters. The success of the Sony PlayStation has surprised even the most vehement Nintendo and Sega fans, and has helped the growth of quality games the world over. The trickle of first-rate titles has now turned into a torrent of fine releases, with particular games coming in from Psygnosis, Capcom, Namco (as you'd expect) and even small third parties like Core. Now, more than a year in from its US launch, gamers across the States and beyond now enjoy games on the Sony console that were mere dreams before.

Of course, Sega haven't been sitting around either, and once they delivered a triple helping of fantastic arcade port-overs, they concentrated on delivering a ton of great releases, with NIGHTS being the obvious jewel in the crown. Now at last, the second stage of arcade port-overs have graced the Saturn, and Sega fans can look forward to great versions of Virtua Fighter 2, Virtual On and Daytona Championship Edition. With a constant stream of third party support (look no further than Powerslave for evidence of their greatness), and

1996 was truly a good year for gaming. The Saturn and PlayStation finally hit their stride, and pumped out a dozen or so truly great games. The total amount of games released this year was pretty small, but quality standards are getting higher, and we've finally seen the birth of a couple of new-to-32-bit genres. Anyway, let's run down this year's trends:

- Quality Western Games: Hey, though there still aren't too incredibly many of them, a small handful of games, such as Tomb Raider, Crash Bandicoot, Jet-Moto, Warhawk, and Wipeout XL, finally made me feel proud to be... um... accidental.

Millions of Great Super Famicom Games We'll Never Play: Okay, maybe not millions. Maybe it's more like ten. But those were ten GREAT games! Tenchi Sōza, Tactics Ogre, Final Fantasy V... the Romancing SaGa series, Treasure Hunter G... Great, great games. The height of 16-bit quality. And now all hope of ever seeing them is lost. Oh, the pain... I wouldn't feel so bad about it if Square, the company who made more than half of these masterpieces, had stood up and promised it would never happen

destined to become yet another banner year. We'll finally see Matsushita's mighty M2, by mid year. While the M2 spec-wise is the Collath of all consoles it will be interesting to see the amount of 3rd-party support they'll be able to secure in the wake of three major platforms already in full swing. Rumors of a Sega/Matsushita joint effort have been circulating for some time. If there's to be a major announcement in '97, this will be it.

And then of course, there's the N64. The launch was more of a splatter with only two games, but in terms of hardware it was a mammoth event. The burning question is, will 3rd party software live up to the intensity of these blessed by the mighty Shigeru Miyamoto? If they do, and there's enough of them to fill in the cracks between Nintendo exclusives, Nintendo may again re-write video game history.

And finally, my two gripes in regards to '96.

Dao, Nintendo's early burial of the Virtual Boy. Bursting with possibility, Nintendo, rather than lowering the price and introducing more software (which they easily could have - 10 games remain on the unknown list in Japan) they just tanked it. Uncharacteristic, to say the least. And two, no one ever did pick up Mana's Hoppenden, the Super Mario World sequel with massive depth and personality to burn. Otherwise, '96 was a year I'll never forget.

you have a formidable force in the console wars.

Finally, the great lumbering beast known as Nintendo finally granted gamers with the first truly astounding glimpse into the future. Mario has offended Italians throughout the world, but no one can argue that his new adventure is the most amazing video game ever. With the seminal Pilotwings following, WaveRace wowing folks across the globe and future releases set to send gamers into a frenzy, Nintendo has returned to reclaim their throne... will they succeed? You're about to find out...

Finally, any self-respecting gamer knows the birth of future top-selling releases usually begins in the arcade, and 1996 was no exception. The launch of Tekken 2 was supplemented by Soul Edge, while the Sega camp gave us the delights of Goundelord and Virtua Fighter 3. 1997 starts with Namco and Sega fiercely contesting their arcade might, with Capcom ready to pounce with the legendary Street Fighter 3, and SNK continuing to produce bigger and better sequels to their already awesome repertoire. Just think; this time next year, you'll be playing Street Fighter 3 in the home... The future's looking very bright indeed!

again, but that's not looking too likely. I want commitments, written in the blood of their top executives, that we're getting Final Fantasy Tactics AND Saga Frontier. Rmph.

The Nintendo 64: On the one hand, Nintendo does deserve some accolades for not rushing out a bunch of half-finished games, even though the pressure to do so must have been enormous. On the other hand, what the hell? How could the company that dominated video games for so many years suffer such an incredibly deep game shortage? Are they even trying to get some 3rd party support together? Why don't they hire some more people so they can actually release more than three games a year themselves?

The M2: Isn't it funny the way that we knew absolutely nothing more about the M2 than we did at this same time last year?

Well, that's my little "year in review." There were definitely some sore points in '96, but I'm a happy man overall. Here's hoping for even better times in '97.



1996 can be considered the first 'true' year of the next generation. By the end of the first quarter, Jaguar and 3DO were dead, PlayStation had found its footing and Saturn had proved it was capable of staying in the race with its impressive second wave of software. The N64 was looming on the horizon for a September release, and the scene was set for a fierce battle between Sony, Sega and Nintendo.

The battle of the three systems became the battle of the three mascots. The inspired *Crash Bandicoot*, revolutionary *Mario 64* and magical *NIGHTS* all clashed on the shelves, fighting for market share. All three games were exceptional, pushing their respective systems to glorious new heights, but in this race quality counts for little, and public opinion is everything. When the dust settled, PlayStation had taken a firm lead in both America and Japan, *N64* had smashed all records for launch sales and Sega was relegated to third place.

In the arcades, Model 3 finally made its American debut,

bringing a new level of realism to polygon graphics, while Capcom's CPS 3 did the same thing for 2D. The lead time between arcade and home conversions dropped even more (*SFA2*'s was eight months), and Sega continued to prove that no Model 2 coin-op was too powerful to fit onto the Saturn.

If one genre characterized 1996, it was the 3D beat-'em-up. *Tekken 2*, *Soul Edge*, *VF3*, *Fighting Vipers*, *Last Bronx*, *Star Gladiators* – even Square jumped on the bandwagon with *Tobal No. 2*. 1996 took the fighting game into the third dimension, along with every other game genre, and for the first time polygons became more common than sprites.

1996 was an exciting year. We saw the death of 16-bit, the growth of 32-bit and the birth of 64-bit. There have been ups and downs, winners and losers, casualties and tragedies, but above all, there have been some really, really great games. We're coming out of the 16-bit slump and entering a newer, brighter era for gaming. There's never been a better time for the industry, and there's never been a better time to be a GameFan.

1996, while an amazing year for games, was also deeply depressing. This was the year everything changed. This was the year a powerful new system arrived, while many others left (or are leaving) the race. This was the year texture-mapped polygons achieved a solid foothold, nearly guaranteeing 2D hand-drawn titles are on the way out. This was even the year Capcom actually made a 3D fighting game, which I'm sure means something terrible. And the worst, this was the year 32-bit became the standard, leaving my once-beloved 16-bit soon to be extinct. I hate change.

Anyway, enough complaining. 1996 had some outstanding games, perhaps some of the best ever. The PlayStation was amazing, giving us simply indescribably cool titles like *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil*. *Sukkoden*, easily the best 32-bit RPG ever finally hit our shores. *Crash Bandicoot* was hyper cool, the perfect combination of incredible graphics and bitchin' 8-bit style platform gameplay. And you can't forget Namco's groovy additions to the PlayStation's '96 lineup with *Tekken 2* and *Ridge Racer Revolution*. With these kinds of games, there's no doubt why the PlayStation is number one...

The Saturn also had a great year, if only for its 1st party games. *Panzer Dragoon Zwej* was stunningly beautiful. *NIGHTS* was a

great experience, and *Virtua Cop 2* let you shoot people. Capcom and Working Designs helped a bit, but where's the rest of the 3rd party support?

The N64 was originally made out to be the super-system. A system that only produced quality games, and plenty of them. A system that would make us totally forget about 32-bit. As everyone knows, only 2 games hit on launch, the other systems still look great, and people are still hungry. *Mario* was fun for the first time through, but the other available games leave something to be desired. I'm sure next year's software lineup will be better.

As expected, this was the worst year 16-bit's ever had. This is the end of the line for my once favorite systems, sniffl... I'm sure I'll get over it. It's just, I feel bad for us Americans. There were so many great Japanese games that never came out this year, no *Seichi Sozo*, no new Square titles, *no Tactics Ogre*. But hey, we had hot American games like *Mohawk* and *Headphone Jack*, and that's what counts. Yeah!

Well, you made it through Orlou's Year End Review Rant. Thanks for reading the entire thing, I'm proud of you! Now go out and spread my wisdom amongst your friends... Excelsior!

It seems that everyone else is using this space to sound off on, among other things, Sony, Sega and Nintendo's spot in the marketplace. I guess that is the technical meaning of a "year in review," but I'm going to address what I feel was the most profound gaming trend in '96: the virtual disappearance of hand-drawn games. Compare the ratio of polygonal games in our Megawards - it's about 3:1! And these were selected by a staff that's (half of us, anyway)

in love with 2D games. And even when companies like Capcom (gods), SNK, Konami and fringe-dwellers like Treasure craft sparkling hand-drawn games, the modern gamer doesn't like 'em. Well, some people, cool people do, I guess. But the majority of video game players associate hand-drawn graphics with tired, old systems, and glitchy polygons with the future. Don't get me wrong, though - I love 3D games, too. As much as any of you. Yet my heart lies with 2D. When Capcom, the last bastion of hand-drawn goodness, announced *Star Gladiador* and (cheek!) *Street Fighter EX* this year, a part of my gaming soul, well... died. That probably sounds pretty extreme, but perhaps you don't understand the preternatural psychic bond I have

with all that which is Capcom. (Uh, after reading that last sentence you must truly think I'm completely off my rocker...) These 3-D games, however brilliant they are technically, just shouldn't come from Capcom! It's a travesty! Murder of ideals! It'll put your eye out! Well, maybe not, but... Oh, wait!

And Mario! Sure, we all know it's a godly game and everyone will be copying it for the next several years, but... it should have been 2D! Hey, wait... where

are you all going? Come back here!

Damn! That rant ended perfectly and only 300 words! Um, um... read it again! Er, more room... uh... oh, I'll have to reeqn on my earlier statement and do what everyone else did. In a nutshell: PlayStation - it rocked. Three titles are all I need to mention here: *Resident Evil*, *Sukkoden*, *Tomb Raider*. Saturn - it was cool. Lots of neat games, but unfortunately none with the epic qualities of the above-mentioned PS trio. N64: Three games. One hot. 'Nuff said. Other stuff: Not enough RPGs. Beyond-hot '95-'96 Japanese SFC games will never see the light of day here. DK... I've finally reached the end of this box!

Whee!

Knightmare

Orion

Nick Box



RAGE RACER

R REVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



CHIEF HAMBLETON
WELL, HELLO!
A FANCY LADY!

I was expecting some pretty awesome - self-of-my-prints - trade style rascals from the Namco developers; simply because the game in question was the next big racing title to hit the PlayStation. From the game that sold the Sony machine (*Ridge Racer*) to the phenomenal adrenaline rush of the follow-up - which altered more or less everything (*Ridge Racer Revolution*), there's been something special, nay magical, about Namco's offerings. Now, after quite a period, the calm-up (and now PlayStation) plants are set to stamp into view once more; waving and enticng you with two unbelievable video games. One of these is the next in the *Ridge Racer* lineage to print money: the souped-up, turbo-injected *Rage Racer*. So, is this a worthy inclusion into any self-respecting gamer's Namco shrine, or another Cyberated? Let's pull up to the starting line and rev our engines to find out more...

The first big improvement has to be the introduction; you've got a mish-mash of cool and crazy images,

from unbelievably realistic CG cars tearing around a trackway to Reiko Nagase (the all-new Namco lady

announcer) sat astride a throbbing motor, bekiing you with a knowing glance, post and a wink ("u-huh-huh..."). This has the usual quality of a Namco introduction (i.e., it's awesome), and with a suitably pumpin'

techno anthem pulsing away in the background, it is a perfect way of attracting you to the game at hand. Then, you're greeted by the *Rage Racer* title screen and a choice of Grand Prix, Time Trial, Control and Option modes.

Of course, not being a NeGcon man myself (I left that one to those who prefer it, like the Razman), I hastily negotiated the options screen and prepared for the new circuits. As you can probably guess, a variety of courses isn't what's on offer here; there's essentially one racetrack divided into four separate tracks; not the 15 courses some of the more optimistic editors craved. But no matter, because the circuits on offer are the best you've ever seen; taking all the best features from past *Ridge Racers* (a beach front with cats, yachts and a cruise liner and airships buzzing you as you race) and implementing some of the more spectacular effects of *Ridge*

Racer (very sharp corners, hills, a very similar cityscape and the San Francisco-style three-tier uphill road) to create a



A nitro burning high octane adrenaline rush to the checkered flag!

brisk biking trip into arcade racing.

Anyone who's ever remotely considered themselves a gamer should know of the control system for *Ridge Racer* from previous experience; you shift gears, power-slide around corners and bumping into the sides of the track judges you back into play. This isn't your hill-in-a-simulation F1-type affair; more like an intense arcade experience testing your car-handling skills to the very limits. This time around however, you'll be amazed at just how realistic the testers make that damn all the scenery look; there's obviously been some major programming going into this game. The result? Greek lumpy roads, a small fishing harbor with lighthouses, and tracks that wrap around so that you can see other cars racing far



away into the distance. The cool thing is, this remains of a super-smooth 30fps and never slows down. Ever. Oh yes, I was excited. And then I discovered the cars.

Thirteen racing vehicles await the *Ridge Racer*. To start with, you're treated to a slow lumbering box-car beast, but with perseverance, you'll obtain a cool Mini Clubman-like car (nippy but lacking power), a dragster convertible (oh, yeah!) and even a chrome lawnmower truck (check that acceleration!). Once certain obligations have been met, you're eventually allowed to race the *Ridge Racer* version of the Devil Car, a purple monstrosity with a massive top speed of 994 kph! This goes on fast that the road texture-maps play tricks on your eyes and actually look like they're moving backwards! This is just how fast this game is!



There's also much more longevity this time around. Aside from the four different courses, there's the opportunity to race them backwards, choose whether your car grips or slides, and the best bit; adding your own details to the head of your racer. As you can see from the screenshot, of Chief Hamblton's been busy painting his inflated visage on all his racers, and you can also change your racing stripes and main body color to any you desire. And that's just the beginning...

There's eleven cups to race for in total; five forward, five backward and one featuring the three hyper-secret vehicles. Each set is divided into three at-hour races, with the points you receive after each race, plus the points you receive after each

win accumulating so that you're able to either upgrade your car to the next level, or buy another brand new motor. Now you're encouraged to race for better vehicles and faster courses; a brilliant incentive and excellent fun as well. Of course, the track has been designed in such a way that there's no let-up, a multitude of tight corners and very, very steep hills to rocket up or down. So now, instead of powering around every corner, you're actually encouraged to brake and turn; making the whole process more like a racing contest while still retaining all the arcade-style tactics and adrenaline-seeked rides.

Of course, this wouldn't be a Namco racer without pumpin' techno entheos, and *Ridge Racer* supplies nine of these (plus one hidden). Although not as instantly cool as *Race Hero* or *Maximum Zone*, they really do grow on ya and incorporate more styles; from drum n' bass to jazz. Oh, and don't tell anyone, but they've sampled *The Prodigy*, er, predictably that time around (along with Daftzone, Hallowden, Termination Source... you knew the drill). Space permits me from informing you all what happened when we collected our eleventh gold cup, or why original *Ridge Racer Ryukyu* cars were seen in some later cups. What I can tell you is that Namco has spent considerable time perfecting the ultimate driving circuit and it's definitely paid off.

Certainly, er, or, secondhand video game books may groan and say it's all been done before. You know what Hamblton says? Stuff 'em! For those craving excitement in their games and need their daily fix of intense speed like no other game (this even blows away the previous champion, *Wipe Out XXI*), you have and must obtain *Ridge Racers* seen as humanly possible. This is quite possibly the greatest racing game on the planet; the pitifully stumbling tragedy that is *Cars in USA* shouldn't even be mentioned in the same issue, never mind the same article. Soay should be very proud and honored to have such developers working on their machine, and every Namco fan should rejoice; this is pure gaming excellence... again. —CH



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Tune-up, change body color, and even design your own car logos! Make sure to keep an eye out for your masterpiece during the grueling races.

SOUL BLADE

Chosen by history persons become soldiers.

Engraved in history individuals become heroes.

The story of swords and souls transmitted from generation to generation surpassing time and world.



After recovering from the rush of *Race Racer*, another shiny silver bundle of CD joy from Namco landed in my lap. This must be my lucky month; not only do I get to play the best console racing game ever seen, but I also witness the next fighting game from Namco. Forget your *Toshinden*s and *Criticons*; this is how a weapons-based fighting game should look!

Without a doubt the most stunning graphical fighting feast ever to grace any console, *Soul Edge* (Japan), or *Soul Blade* (US) is the next PlayStation game that you simply must go out of your

way to purchase. Fans of fighting games (2D or 3D) will be in ecstatic glee when they obtain their copy of this Namco masterpiece, and with good reason; this is the first game which is actually superior than the arcade version!

First, let's talk about that

CERVANTES DE LEON - THE WRECK OF PROUD MANHOOD
WEAPON - THE EVIL SWORD SOUL EDGE FIGHTING STYLE - LET THE SWORD BE

WEAPON - THE EVIL SWORD SOUL EDGE FIGHTING STYLE - LET THE SWORD BE



VOLDO - THE LAST LUNATIC

WEAPON - 'KATAR' HAND MOUNTED BLADES

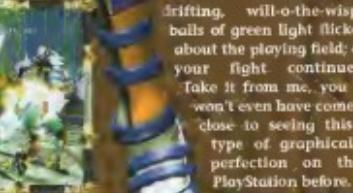
FIGHTING STYLE - FREESTYLE

introduction. Never, ever has there been a CG intro like it; it betters *Tekken 3*, *Wipout XL*; indeed any game you care to mention. Nick Rox had to be stretched out after viewing only half of it. In it, Mitsurugi strikes two foes in a cornfield during sunset, and the effect is real: Li Long stands on a raft as it flows along a river winding along a deep ravine. And Toki leaps about an emperor's castle, throwing down fluorescent runes and destroying a hideous devil samurai. Nothing you've seen will prepare you for this.



TEAM BATTLE 1
CERVANTES
LIVE VS
CERVANTES

PERFECT YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS.
7 INCREDIBLE BATTLE MODES TO CHOOSE!



graphical masterpiece; indeed, *Nemesis* has rendered an entire valley for Rock and his child to look down upon which only appears for two seconds in the intro; this is how hardcore the introduction is!

Then you'll find that the in-game graphics are also nearly as stunning and you'll be blown away by the light-sourcing, the

stages made entirely from 3D textured polygons and the super rock-steady 30 fps animation. Let's take a random stage: You're fighting in a bamboo forest in bright sunlight, a small cave next to the ring, and various paper symbols are blowing in the breeze. Halfway through your fight, the light darkens to night; a floating ghostly head flits about in the cave, spirits fly about the arena, and drifting, will-o-the-wisp balls of green light flicker about the playing field; as your fight continues. Take it from me, you won't even have come close to seeing this type of graphical perfection on the PlayStation before.





So the graphics are great, huh? Well, the game itself is also pretty damn special; you've got a whole host of characters, playing identically to Soul Edge Ver. II (arcade) and indeed Star Gladiator, with two weapon attack buttons, a kick and a block. Now I'm not a block man myself ("Get thee behind me, Mortal Kombat!"), but the 3D nature of the battles lends itself more to this style of blocking... and once you get used to it, it works well. Another excellent feature is the durability of your weapon; keep chipping away at a blocking character and you'll wear his weapon down until you disarm him. Now you can wade in and hock to your heart's content!

This is pretty much identical to Soul Edge Ver. II, with ring outs only if you float on opponent and a great narration at the end of each bout ("The epic battle ended with the victory of..."). However, this has the added benefit of increased details on some stages (water on the Li Long raft stage for example), all the modes present in Tekken 2 (Practice, Survival, Time Attack, Team Battle), as well as Edge Master Mode, where an epic series of plot-based fights await you.

Of the characters, Cervantes and Hwang are playable, Soul Edge himself looks totally cool and there's five different costumes and up to four different endings for each character (which aren't CG, they're real-time). We've also found (but not played as) two hidden characters (Tanegashima with a bow and arrow) and Han Myong (the master of Hwang), and are awaiting confirmation about rumors of a third... These

SIEGFRIED - GERMAN SWORDSLINGER
WEAPON - 'ZWEI-HANDER' TWO-HANDED SWORD
FIGHTING STYLE - FREESTYLE

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - NAMCO

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - NAMCO

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



CHIEF
HAMBLETON
Cutting edge of
PlayStation
software.



TAKI - UNDERGROUND HUNTER WEAPON - 'REKKI-MARU' FIGHTING STYLE - TOKI

has different attributes and this effects every fight in numerous ways. Pretty awesome stuff... especially as the total number of weapons is over 80!

NEW OUTFITS

There's a total of five different outfits for every character in Soul Edge; two colors for the one player outfit and two for the two player. Additionally, there's



a fifth color and all new outfit for all your favorite characters; chosen by Japanese fans of the game. This brings up a number of points; that Namco care a great deal about their products and that there's some pretty scary Japanese outfit designers out there (Voldo in a pink coat? Etc.).

new characters look just as good as the main katana-wielding maniacs, and the narrator even announces them as a "Guest Fighter"!

Pre-order your copy now. This is worth paying just for the intro. Fortunately, Namco has included a fully-rounded and phenomenally playable fighting game into the bargain. This is the PlayStation conversion of the century. Sony should thank their lucky stars they have Namco on their team... You can immediately tell just how much time and meticulous effort has been spent on this. Rest assured, we'll bring you the secrets, moves and everything you'll ever need in future issues of GameFan and MegaFan. But until then... En garde! **CH**

NEW - THE EDGE MASTER MODE!

As you progress through this marvelous story mode, you'll be up against a variety of opponents in your quest for eight different weapons (all which can be used in two-player fights), and each fight will be under different conditions (you're poisoned, you fight three characters one at a time; you get the picture). This is just great, and guaranteed to keep you hooked for days. Each weapon



>FINALLY, A TRUE 32-BIT MEGAMAN!!

I've said this many times, but my favorite game company in the world is Capcom. Much of this love may come from, quite literally, my first experience with video games: Playing Trojan and its original Megaman back-to-back at my friend's house in... it must have been... 1987. Looking

back, I've found that I took such creative gameplay for granted. Here was an action game in which you could actually use your fallen foes' weapons! No longer were you restricted to using the same techniques level after level, and there was distinct strategy in the order you took out each robot, and which enemies you used. Although nobody can deny that the over-similarity of "Doctor Robot - find out which weapon works best - defeat

robot etc." got unbelievably tedious after five 8-bit sequels, (and 7 did little to help - there just wasn't enough new) with a few modest upgrades, Megaman

completely stands the test of time. Now, looking for a 32-bit Megaman, I will be disappointed. There is no time-scrolling, there are no polygons, and there aren't any especially impressive effects to speak of. What does

have is achingly smooth trademark Capcom armament and

extremely solid, satisfying, no-frills gameplay - not to mention at least 100% of the TV-quality animation. Interspersed throughout the game. Added to the usual discover what-weapon-works-best

Megaman fare are literally TONS of new platforming ideas: each stage has one cool new feature, like riding on a sled, shooting beams, picturing a body bubble-craft, swinging Simon

Belmont style, and even mini-puzzles, which are never repeated until you reach Dr. Wily's fortress. Going beyond that

are the many new forms of trusty Rush,

MEGAMAN-8

THE
METAL HEROES

such as the Rush-Bike and Rush-Bomb, and numerous new weapons that do more than just inflict damage... they actually perform tasks like lifting you up, giving you an extra boost while jumping, lighting dark hallways, and riding onto posts in classic Biohazard Commando fashion. Even the standard Megaman boss engines have been improved: Whereas before you never knew if you were attacking a boss with the "right" weapon, you now get a special example and animation sequence if you make the correct choice. I still haven't even mentioned the all-new shop system, which you can read about below.

The graphics glisten in certain areas, and fall a bit short in others. At the top of the list is the utterly gorgeous animation of everything - the enemies, the bosses, the backgrounds, and Megaman himself. Nothing is flimsy in this game. If you've played any recent arcade Capcom fighter you know exactly what I'm talking about. It's not only smooth, but there's so much of it on screen as to be numbering. At any one time, there can be thirty or forty little Metas (the little hummed duds that've been in Megaman since day one) on screen, and when each one is shot, it erupts into a shower of tiny shrapnel, gears, and wires - each a sprite in and of itself. The area of MM3's graphics that needs improvement is

THE BLUE BOMBER IS BACK!!

REVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

MUSIC RANK - FANTASTIC

THE MYSTERIOUS
NEW MEGAMAN
DUO

> A MEGAMAN FIRST: DR. LIGHT'S ITEM SHOP

A Megaman with tons of new gameplay features?? Mental MM3 is the first game since MM2 that has tons of substantial gameplay upgrades, and Dr. Light's Lab, where you can buy items, is one of them. You exchange bolts, which can be found

hidden in each level, for power-ups like new weapons, faster speed, the ability to exchange life and weapon recharges, stage exit functions, etc.



anywhere. There is rarely more than three levels at once, but hey... even they should be impressive on the PlayStation. To my horror, however, MM3 features a small amount of rendered background elements and textures, with touch-ups to make them seem hand-drawn. There's not much to be said about the sounds, as the standard Megaman music upgraded to top status, happy bouncy non-intrusive tunes exceeding all bounds of fun. The awesome amount of voice from Megaman & the bosses, although it's yet to be seen whether this feature will be carried over to the American version of the game.

As I said in last month's Letters review, if you're an old-school gamer you probably pretty much Megaman & his rock-solid nostalgic feel and challenging game play. These expecting a massive overhaul of the frayed Blue Bomber, however, need not apply. Oh, by the way, 1996 represents Megaman's 10th birthday... Many thanks go to Capcom for a decade of fun, and here's to the next ten years! **NUR**

NICK ROX
Capcom - 2-D gods



Maybe it should've been called
Twisted Mettle.

RE-LOADED

THE HARD-CORE SEQUEL

KISS ME, YOU FOOL!

Interplay has done it again: taken the meanest, crudest, dirtiest crew of killing machines and given you the controls. *Re-Loaded "The Hard-core Sequel"* takes off where *Loaded* left off, with a better 3D engine, more complex level design, bigger/badder/better weapons, and some truly hideous new characters.

Sister Maggle, a roving Cyber Nun, was originally sent into the galaxy to collect funds for a new roof. However, since a couple of undesirables put a bullet through her armored head a few millennia ago, she's been on permanent malfunction.

The Consumer can shear through bone with her razor-sharp choppers and, I'm told, often does. Her shots cook the meat they explode, yum-yum. And Butch, well, we won't even talk about Butch. Senator what's-his-name would be camping on the GF stoop. So you see, as I said, the new characters are truly hideous.

The levels themselves (of which there are now 12) are where *Re-Loaded* really reloads. No longer must you simply find the key to open the door. This time out you are given specific mission objectives

THE

FREAKS

ARE

BACK!

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPED - GREMLIN

1-2 PLAYERS

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY

E. STORM
INTERPLAY
HAS DONE IT
AGAIN!



that will have you performing different tasks in each level. Winning strategy must be developed and put in play or you'll die, to put it bluntly. The control in *Re-Loaded* is, for the most part, the same as *Loaded*'s, except for the fact that you can now interact with objects on the playfield. That's a good thing. As for the music, well, turn it up, game freaks, a techno feast is at hand.

In retrospect, *Re-Loaded* is bigger (I figure nearly double in size), has all new weapons and special attacks, better graphics, a better 3D engine, burning hot new characters, great music, and tasty CG intros for one and all. I guess that spells "successful sequel," indeed. E

PSYCHIC FORCE



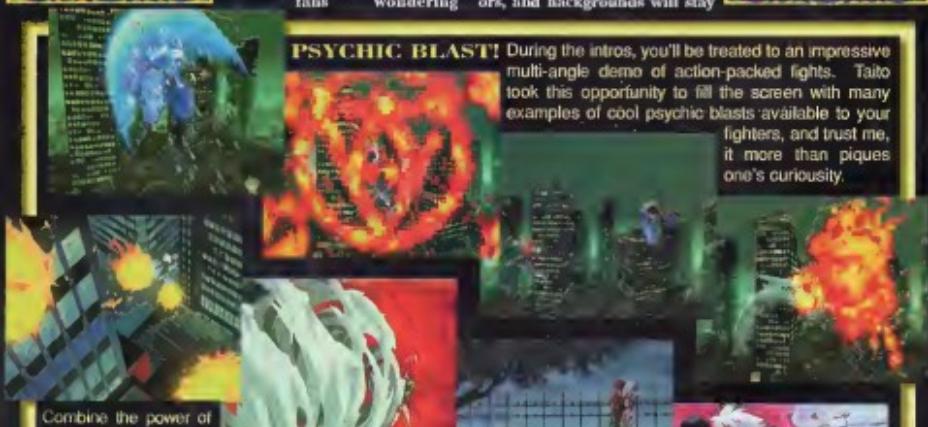
You've gotta stop and ask yourself just how many classic 32-bit titles would have stayed in Japan if it weren't for Acclaim. Think about it; *Layer Section*, *Bust-A-Move 2*, *Bubble Bobble Collection*, and *Darius Gaiden* are all games that would have never made it here if Acclaim hadn't picked 'em up. Their latest Japanese acquisition, *Psychic Force* (another Taito original), will be coming your way shortly. For all you fans

about the translation, I have some cool news to report...

First-off, the anime intro will make it into the American version completely unchanged. Yup, Acclaim's core anime people decided to leave the entire intro, complete with Japanese lyrics and music, fully intact. Tell me that's not amazing. In fact, apart from the obvious English translations made to the story mode, all the characters, colors, and backgrounds will stay



PSYCHIC BLAST! During the intros, you'll be treated to an impressive multi-angle demo of action-packed fights. Taito took this opportunity to fill the screen with many examples of cool psychic blasts available to your fighters, and trust me, it more than piques one's curiosity.



Combine the power of hot FMV with great animation and a cool story, and you get a kick-ass intro. Cast your fears aside, for Acclaim has managed the impossible: They kept the Japanese music – even the lyrics – completely intact and unedited. Yes, there's hope for the future!

COOL ANIMATION!



the same. The only other significant changes made, kudos once again to Acclaim, involve the computer AI. That's right, before the game hits these shores, the programmers will have taken the additional time to tweak the AI, as per Acclaim's specifics. I'll explain the importance of these AI enhancements later. For now, it's on to gameplay...

Psychic Force casts two psychic fighters (among 9) into a cool polygonal 3D battlefield arena. Fights take place inside a cube-shaped force field (check out the shots to get an idea of the size), and the characters are free to float anywhere within. The battles are totally unique: Each fighter has his or her own cool psychic power, ranging anywhere from powerful holy beams to perplexing teleports. Using high or low power attacks, and a combination of simple pad rotations,

you can shower your opponents with dramatic psychic blasts (a psychic power bar indicates the strength of the attack). There are also hand-to-hand attacks, combos, and defensive shielding. Getting back to the American version's AI, a few PF fans around the office

the 3D backgrounds, are colorful, smooth, and well designed. So too are the polygonal fighters, with cool textures, multiple colors, and great animation and expressions (and only a touch of poly break-up). The sound effects and voices are also

excellent, and the music, well, it's by Zuntata (the musical geniuses behind many a Taito classic). As for their *Psychic Force* soundtrack... I want everyone in the world to hear this music and witness the power of Zuntata!

Guys, this is truly a rare event. A very good piece of Japanese-developed software is being ported to America, without tampering (in all the cool areas, anyway), and improved gameplay. I'm shocked! Nice job Acclaim, gamers appreciate the details, and you pulled through.

Psychic Force is a great game, so keep an eye out for it. G



commented that the computer plays more like a human now, i.e., it moves much more unpredictably, responds to ranged attacks, and blocks more frequently (a definite improvement over the import version).

Never before has fighting been this original. The graphics, more precisely



LONG RANGE POWER!!!

The most integral part of any *Psychic Force* battle involves constant movement. If you're shooting a weak projectile, you have time to dodge the return fire. Power blasts take longer, however, so immediately block or tap the dodge button:

IN YOUR FACE COMBO MADNESS!!!

Never underestimate the effectiveness of close-range combat. Once an opening appears, slap your foes with a flurry of punches for mega damage. But get ready to throw up a shield, or quickly hold block, because you're instantly wide open.



**R
REVIEW**



DEVELOPER - TAITO

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR '97



GLITCH
A RARE INSTANCE
OF A GOOD JAPANESE PORT-OVER





THE DIVIDE: ENEMIES WITHIN

The Divide: Enemies Within is one of those low profile releases that I find myself reviewing more and more. Along with *Grid Runner*, *Pinball*, and *Blast Chamber*, there are games out there that sometimes struggle for notoriety among the *Tekkeas* and *Wipeouts* of the PS world. And just like the aforementioned titles, *The Divide* is more than worthy of your time and effort.

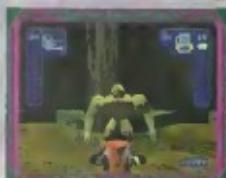
As you can see by looking



at these two glorious pages, Radical's *The Divide: Enemies Within* is driven by a powerful plot and great CG FMV. I'm not sure who the narrator is, but he has a captivating, entrancing voice, making the storyline completely believable. He tells the sad tale of the Divide, a land occupied by a race of peaceful, primitive creatures. One day this serenity is smashed forever, as aliens probe the world mercilessly, cursing the creatures below with strange technology. As others arrive to explore the planet's surface, the once innocent creatures ambush the newcomers with blind, furious rage. The beasts disappears into the planet's hidden reaches, taking one of the mechanized explorers along. With a failing heating system, the remaining explorer freezes over in minutes, trapped in an icy prison. Years later, unaware of the time lost, the explorer defrosts and sets off to find his captured partner. Cool, huh? Of course, this is where you step in.

The game begins with a short training session, where you'll be test driving your mech-suit. Here you'll be treated to the full compliment of weapons available in the game, as well

INCREDIBLE FMV STORYLINE!
The Divide includes some of the cleanest, coolest CG FMV sequences ever seen, easily immersing you into the storyline.



R
REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPED - RADICAL

PUBLISHER - VIACOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
SHE AIN'T TOO PRETTY, BUT GAMEPLAY RULES THE DAY!



as all the walking and jumping upgrades (this level, by the way, takes place before the explorers go to the Divide - hence the free-for-all). The mech has standard issue laser cannons on both arms, which can (and must) be raised and lowered using the shoulder buttons to blast land and air based enemies. You have jump and double jump (just press the button twice), and various armor and gun upgrades (including the powerful gatling gun). When you first enter the Divide, your mech's damaged, you can't jump, and the



laser cannon is your only weapon. But that's why you play games, right? Time for a little exploration!

Fifty+ locations, spread across broken landscapes and dark catacombs, can be visited and re-visited at will. In fact, you'll be doing a lot of hacktracking as items are found in order to access new areas and/or complete current ones. For example, your first "quest" involves locating the Jumper. Once it's yours, almost half a dozen new areas, each with their own set of platforming challenges, are open for play. In effect, progress is not only predicated by certain items, it will often immediately exploit the most recently acquired power-ups. Finally, cool boss encounters break up the action, and the story will develop as you progress deeper into the world.

The 3D worlds are constructed entirely of textured polygons, running at 15 to 30fps. The low frame rate usually hits when you use the higher of the two camera angles, due to the mass of enemies and objects being displayed at once (and unfortunately this is also the most useful angle). Honestly, the 3D engine needs some work, but the

game content itself more than compensates. The music consists of a droning ambient score and the sound is limited to gunfire, explosions, and incidental enemy and environmental effects.

Well, like I just said, the graphics ain't so hot (by today's PS standards, anyway) but the game is really very good. Once you dedicate a couple of hours (among many, many more) to *The Divide*, you'll see that it actually has much to offer in terms of gameplay and depth. G



LEAGUE OF PAIN

For some reason, I find myself consumed by this deep-rooted fascination for arenas. Personally, if a game has a little hidden stadium (i.e., *Guardian Heroes*), I'll probably spend more time there than in the rest of the game. Why? Well, I guess it's 'cause I love the idea of being stuck in one place with a bunch of other power-hungry psychos lookin' to kill. Enter *League of Pain*, a multi-player futuristic sport set in a

deep, dark, pit arena.

Pitball's the last violent cyber-sport title I played, and despite the opinions you might have read elsewhere, it is a very good game that I urge you to check out. While *League of Pain* doesn't incorporate



CHARGE UP YOUR BALLS!
BUST THROUGH THE ENEMIES'
DEFENSE, USE THEIR CHARGING
PAD, AND YOU'RE READY TO SCORE!



COOL REPLAYS!!!
REWIND OR FAST FORWARD AND
WARPING... AIN'T IT NEAT?!

the spectacular super-moves found in *Pitball*, it features very similar gameplay characteristics. Two teams of four players battle in a giant polygonal arena in an attempt to score on an elevated goal. Strangely, both teams share the same goal, and scoring is determined by the color (or "charge") of the ball. In order to charge the ball, you must venture into your opponent's end of the arena, fight off the inevitable defensive flurry, and make contact with the charging area. If done correctly, the ball will change color (to signify your possession) and you may take a shot at scoring. If you (oops!) score with a neutral ball, you'll actually give those points to your enemy.

As you can see, *League of Pain* tries to be as unique a game as possible, considering the narrow scope of this genre. When we get around to the review, I'll tell you all about some of the various offensive and defensive



strategies at your disposal. I know for certain, however, that *League of Pain* has the hottest graphics ever seen in a game of this type. The polygonal players and stadium are rampant with mad light-sourcing and cool lens flares, and the animation and frame rate are truly top notch.



Be sure to check back with me soon for more coverage of *League of Pain*. Even though big name Psygnosis is publishing *LOP*, I'm afraid it might be lost in this sea of PS software we're currently dealing with. And, as with *Pitball*, I'm here to make sure that doesn't happen. G



P
PREVIEW

S
PlayStation

DEVELOPER - BEYOND REALITY

PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 1ST QUARTER '97



GLITCH
THAT IS&%
BALL SHORTS
OUT MY ARMS!!

SURVIVAL IS SIMPLE, NEVER STOP RUNNING.

While graphics powerhouses come and go,
it's titles like Grid Runner that focus
on gameplay that have the potential to deliver
long-term play to fans.

- Next Generation

"It's unique, challenging, and
packed with addictive gameplay."

-GAMEFAN



GRID RUNNER™

- Over 57 rounds of gameplay
- 15 monster opponents
- Two-player head-to-head action
- 20 independent two-player rounds
- Ability to perform different magical spells



ALSO
AVAILABLE FOR
WINDOWS®



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www.virgin.com



Radical
ENTERTAINMENT



Billions of years ago (my, that's a long time), an alien soldier was transporting his civilization's life-giving ore when the creation of the solar system caused his ship to crash, scattering the ore throughout the newly-formed earth. Over time, ten humans came in contact with the ore... and they all work at GameFest Ko, they were transformed into this game for you to play... War Gods!

This 3D arcade original disappeared rather quickly and now has re-emerged on the Sony PlayStation for all

War Gods

certainties to enjoy. In Midway's defense, I can't imagine why it came and went so fast. The game has a juicy 3D engine, hot fatalities and quality animation. Maybe the whole god thing ("You are chosen") was just too much for the neighborhood.

WG's moves are the tap-tap type, and yes, it's a block button genre, but the controls are surprisingly smooth and the combo system easily absorbed. The action takes place in real 3D (3D buttons allows rotational gameplay) and the texture mapping which features "digital skin technology" (hey don't look at me), is actually really good. War

Gods definitely demands further investigation (plus I grabbed enough shots for like 3 layouts), so we'll be back with a review in the next issue. If the game comes out before then and you're A) an MK fan, or B) like 3D fighters heavy on carnage, you have my permission to just buy it. E

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - EURICOM

PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW



E. STORM
ARE YOU A
GOD?
"NO."
THEN DINEE!

Just cause he's a joker doesn't
mean he plays with a full deck.



Get up to Crystal Dynamics' fastest,
endorphin-based 3D action game.

Your team of fellow speed-mongers includes

Niki, Fergie and Sid – an acrobatic wizard,
a slightly twisted jester and his maniacal puppet-on-a-stick. Blit through unbelievably
spacious levels of their deranged 3D kingdom while shape-changing into a fire-blasting dragon
or raging rhino. Just sit down and get taken for a ride, it's pure rocket fuel.



Pandemonium!



Check out our new website at <http://www.crytald.com>



Soon Available on PC CD-Rom

VMX RACING



GRAB YER SKID LIDS.
WE'RE GOIN' RACING!

When I was a teen growing up in the 80's, motocross parks were abundant. Saddleback, Indian Dune and Roughrider were all within driving distance. As an up-and-coming racer, I spent nearly every weekend for some ten years either racing or practicing. Nowadays, cycle parks have fallen victim to sky high insurance rates and are almost completely extinct. It's a shame, really. I can't imagine what my youth would have been like without a Suzuki between my legs.

Since the only flyin' I do these days is on the way to the office, I'm very happy about Playmates' VMX Racing. Finally, the action is being packaged successfully for home use. I've wondered since I got into gaming, why

EXCLUSIVE U UPDATE



DEVELOPER - STUDIO E
PUBLISHER - PLAYMATES
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - MARCH



E. STORM
DOWN 'N DIRTY MX
ACTION... PICK IT UP!



DIG THOSE REPLAYS!



MOTOCROSS was not better represented. Few games exist, and until now what was available pretty much sucked (see Super Motocross on the 32X which came close). The folks over at Studio E, who are developing VMX for Playmates, are obviously taking the task given them very seriously, as they are creating the single best Motocross game to date. When this puppy's done, watch out. Besides the fact that the racers don't put their foot out around tight corners they've managed to stick the mechanics perfectly thus far. The characters look and feel like the real thing.

Bravo. Six tracks are available for your mud-whomping pleasure, ranging from long enduros to ultra-light stadiums and you can enter a single race, practice, or sign up for the entire season. Choose your team from official licenses here, but who cares? 125 or 250cc, and get ready for lightning fast, ultra-populated racing that's as real as it gets. It's surreal in fact that you're often hard pressed just to find your rider in the crowd as the racers





**GRAB THE HOLESHOT
OR FACE A ST TURN TRAFFIC JAM
YOU DON'T WANNA BE A PART OF!**



WHEN THE RACERS STAYED THE CAMERA ROTATES AROUND THE FRAME... ZOOM IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK! YOU'RE IN CONTROL!

Launch up before the pack thins out, just like the real thing. You can set the camera way back or close up, to suit your riding style. The frame rate suffers just a touch when you're mired in the pack but the game moves so fast to begin with you'll pay it no mind. The game's not done yet either, so this could change. E's 3D engine is not only fluid but plants more polygons in your face than you've perhaps ever seen. Each track is privy to complete landscapes. From the cheering crowds at Anaheim Stadium to lush forests, it's all there, all the time. The music in VMXR comes forth courtesy of Tommy Tallarico Studios and the sound effects were sampled from actual bikes, so in the audio dept. VMXR screams like a banshee. As for the gameplay, well, once you grow accustomed to bikes

over cars

and the sensitivity therein, you'll be adrenalin rushing from the starting gate to the finish line. VMXR is a gas to play. As has become the standard of late in racing fare, after each moto you can watch as the entire race plays back just as you played it. Additionally, VMXR supports two players and allows you to split the screen vertically or horizontally. Currently, the frame rate drops dramatically, so I hope they can iron out the kinks.

Visually, VMXR suffers from little to no clipping and everything looks mighty impressive for a polygonal game. As Studio E enters the final stages of development (the game's set for a March release), Playmates seems headed directly for the winner's circle. **E**





SWAGMAN

Another fine Corgo game is making its final approach. Yes, *Swagman*, the game that even Nightmares are scared of, is almost done. We'll have a big blowout on *Swagman* in the next issue.



RUSH HOUR

Psygnosis' *Rush Hour*, an over-head polygon-de-force, allows the player to scale way in and way out. Though early, this racer looks extremely promising. We'll have more as it becomes available.



RALLY CROSS

New in development from Sony, it's *Rally Cross*, the first off-road racer to give *Sega Rally* a run for its money. *Rally Cross* looks extremely promising. The environments rock and the cars feel like the real thing.



ABE'S ADVENTURE

Sad, to display hideous video grabs of this wonderful new title. We'll make up for it as soon as we get a disc. Abe's the coolest and Gamespeak, a truly unique feature. We'll do a feature on Abe's Adventure very soon.



CRYPT KILLER

Aim yer gun and shoot till the screen bleeds. Demons are around every corner in Konami's cryptic arcade port, *Crypt Killer*. If you like shootin' look for a review next month.



NO REMORSE

Crusader: No Remorse, the latest from Origin, is a carnage-filled actioner in the vein of *Crashkull*. While the graphics aren't nearly as sophisticated, the game play seems on track.



COMMAND & CONQUER



It's not often that GameFan covers both the Saturn and PlayStation versions of a game in a single review. Normally they're different enough to warrant individual evaluation (i.e., the Saturn version isn't as good) but in *Command and Conquer*'s case the two versions are so similar there's little point in splitting them up. Plus this way I get to wrangle an extra page of coverage for a game that I feel should be at the top of every strategy fan's shopping list.

If you're a PC owner, you most likely already know

**AT LAST!!!
ONE OF THE
BEST-SELLING
PC TITLES
EVER HITS
THE HOME
CONSOLES!**

about *Command and Conquer*, the pseudo-sequel to the hugely underrated PC action/strategy classic *Dune 2* (also available on Genesis - but it's hard to find). *C&C* is the third most successful PC title EVER, and a strong contender for the greatest action/strategy game of all time.

And now, just as its sequel hits the PC, console owners are finally getting the chance to see what all the fuss is about...

(continued)



DEVELOPER - WESTWOOD

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR '97



KNIGHTMARE
THE ULTIMATE
ACTION/STRATEGY
GAME



Command & Conquer is a real-time war sim that puts you in control of one of two different military powers, locked in a deadly struggle for global supremacy. Every time you start a new campaign you must choose between either the G.D.I. (the good guys) or the Brotherhood of NOD (the bad guys), and your choice will determine both the missions you undertake and the forces at your disposal (each power has certain units exclusive to their ranks). Each force comes on its own CD (*C&C* is a dual CD pack) and has its own story, featuring some of the most impressive FMV you're ever likely to see. And I don't throw comments like that around casually.

The NOD ending is simply mind blowing!

Unlike some strategy games, *C&C* is relatively straight forward to get to grips with. The search-and-destroy gameplay is instantly accessible, while control is achieved through a simple, cursor-driven, point-and-click interface that becomes second nature after only a few minutes of play. Believe it or not, the D-pad makes for a surprisingly good mouse substitute, and all of the PC's keyboard shortcuts (guard unit, force move, force fire) can be accessed through a combination of button presses. To control a unit simply click on it (to

select it), point the cursor where you want it to go and click again. If you click on an enemy, your unit will attack that enemy. It's as simple as that. The side bar interface and group selection is a little more complicated, but not very. Every command you need to build and control your entire army can be accessed in a matter of seconds.

While *C&C*'s gameplay and control interface are refreshingly simple on the surface, the driving mechanics are infinitely more complex. There are hundreds of different ways to approach each new mission, and no two battles are alike. It's not simply a case of the biggest army wins. A few well placed soldiers dug in at a bridge can stop a far

more powerful force from advancing, simply because they have the geographic advantage. In *C&C*'s tactics are everything. Although you'll need quick reflexes to command your units in a combat situation, you'll need an even quicker brain to juggle all the various factors going on at any one time during a mission. Trying to manage three battles and a base simultaneously is enough to induce panic in even the most level-headed gamer.

Although the mission objectives vary from stage to stage (anything from escorting a convoy to capturing a nuclear





warhead) the most common objective involves the complete annihilation of all enemy units in the area (or a variation thereof). Thus a standard mission has three stages: preparation, recon and combat.

In the preparation stage you build up your base, harvest tiberium (an ore that gets you money), and build a force capable of defending your base against enemy attacks. In the recon stage you send out search parties of troops and vehicles to explore the terrain and secure key locations (like bridges and passes) that isolate territory for your side. Finally, once you have established where the enemy base is, and built up a powerful army, you attack. The battles in *C&C* are large, frequent, bloody, and intensely involving.

As I mentioned before, both the PS and Saturn versions of *C&C* are very similar. In fact, in terms of basic gameplay and in-game graphics, they're virtually identical. They're also pretty faithful to the PC original, with spot-on CPU AI, identical sound effects and redbook audio ('I am a mechanical man!'). The only noticeable difference is the graphics – the PC version runs at a higher resolution with slightly more frames of animation – but this doesn't detract from the gameplay in any way.

The Saturn version loads levels slightly quicker than the PS version (not a big deal when a level lasts an hour) and has variable speed settings (a blessing for long battles, believe me). The PS version has much better FMV and, best of all, a campaign of PS exclusive missions.

Unfortunately, neither version has the PC's awesome Link-up mode. Although the CPU AI is good, *C&C* is a game best played against a human opponent, and it's lamentable that console gamers should be denied this pleasure. Virgin claims that they wanted to make the Sega version Net-Link compatible but that Sega didn't provide them with the technology in time. Whatever the case, I smell a missed opportunity.

Despite that one BIG downer, *Command & Conquer* is still one of the best action/strategy games you can buy for a home console. In balance, the PS version is the better of two (slightly), but the differences don't really matter. Whether you own a PS or Saturn, if you have any kind of interest in strategy games at all, or even think you might, then *Command & Conquer* is an essential purchase. It's done more to convert gamers to the joys of strategy than any other game in history, and, given a chance, it might do the same for you. K



COMMAND & CONQUER

SATURN SECTOR

If you put your head to the ground and listen very carefully, you may just be able to hear the rumblings. Something's coming. Something big. Something so awesome, that it could well rupture the fabric of our very existence. Two of the greatest 3D fighting games ever created are about to collide in a 60fps, armor-breaking, guard-reversing polygon extravaganza that's set to make history.

After hands-on experience GameFan is happy to report that *Fighters Megamix* is nothing short of astounding. I don't have the space to go into too much detail this month, so here's a run-down on what to expect.

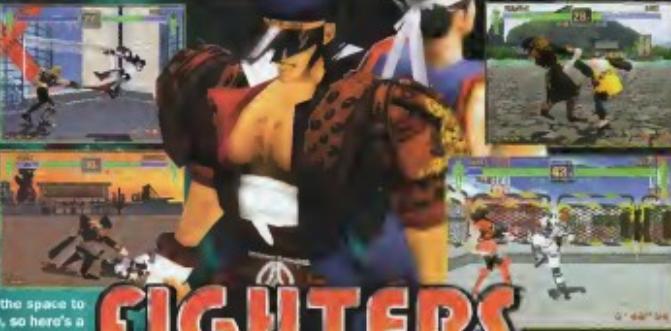
Fighters Megamix has 32 characters (that we know of), with at least 10 secret. All of the *Fighting Vipers* and VF2 characters appear (including bosses), and this time they're equipped with new moves and techniques. Remarkably, the VF characters come with a lot of their VF3 moves, meaning a vast chunk of Yu Suzuki's Model 3 masterpiece is instantly transferred to *Megamix*. The Vipers, too, have had some extra techniques added, though nothing like the VF characters.

We can confirm that the ten secret playable characters include Janet Marshall from *Virtua Cop 2* (who plays like Aoi from VF3); Rent-a-Hero from, er, *Rent-a-Hero*; Bonn and Bark from *Sonic The Fighters*; Akira and Sarah from *VF KIDS*; Shiva (the missing character from VF2), Deku (a bean), Ura Bahn and the Daytona car! There are also some new alternative costumes for a few of the regular characters, including an astounding new kit for Honey.

The game has two markedly different modes of play: VF rules and Fighting Vipers rules. In VF mode the game plays like VF, with precision mechanics and realistic physics. The Viper characters also have no power counter techniques (although though the Vipers still have armor-breaking facilities). In Fighting Vipers mode all hell breaks loose, with floating combos and power counter moves for all characters.

There's so much more I want to talk about (the intro, the different one player paths, the survival and training mode), but I'll save that for the review. Needless to say, Saturn owners everywhere should start smiling now. The ultimate 3D fighting game is just around the corner..

MAJOR MEGAMIX COVERAGE IN THE NEXT GAMEFAN AND MEGAFAN!



FIGHTERS MEGAMIX



P PREVIEW



SEGA SATURN

COMING - MAY
COMING - JUN
COMING - JUL
COMING - AUGUST
AVAILABLE - MAY



KNIGHTMARE
TASTE OF HONEY



Move over, Arnold. SPOT's Got More Moves and Better Reviews.

"One of the finest 32-bit platformers on any system...innovative and addictive...beautiful graphics, Hilarious animation, Stirring music. This game is packed with secrets." —PSX



"I think it's safe to say that this could easily be the best isometric action game ever." —Die Hard Gamefan



"SPOT has found a new home on the PlayStation... fun and imaginative levels... this game looks outstanding."

—EGM

"...a heapin' helpin' of retro-flavored platform-game goodness, and that's a pleasant rarity in the 3-D obsessed PlayStation world. There seems to be addiction written all over this thing."

—PSXtreme



"Editor's top five picks. *SPOT Goes to Hollywood* contains tons of gameplay. The graphics are excellent along with fantastic sound effects."

—EMG2



SPOT
Goes to Hollywood



To order, visit your local retailer
or call 1 888 4VIRGIN



On the surface, *Dark Savior* looks very similar to its pseudo-prequel, *Climax's Landstalker*. They're both isometric action/RPGs with huge landscapes and an compelling story. This time, however, Climax has taken full advantage of the Saturn's 32-bit processing power and CD storage space to deliver a vast and unique adventure that goes beyond *Landstalker* to become unlike any action/RPG you've ever seen.

In *Dark Savior* you play the part of Garian (Fyu-Ya in the Japanese version), an elite Raiken bounty hunter who has finally tracked down and caught his oldest adversary: the villainous Bilan. Bilan is a shape-shifting monster that lives only to kill, and has the power to possess his victim's bodies. Because Bilan cannot be killed by regular means, he has been sentenced to death by carbon freeze on Jaller's Island, a notorious maximum security prison run by the mysterious warden Kurteigen. But on the way there, Bilan breaks



trees and goes on the rampage. What happens next is up to you.

Dark Savior operates an innovative interactive narrative system that Climax have termed 'the Parallel System.' Depending on what you do in the opening ship sequence, the rest of the game will be based on one of five different 'parallel' adventures. Each parallel takes place in the same universe.

CLIMAX'S GROUNDBREAKING SATURN LANDSTALKER FOLLOWUP HITS THE U.S.!!

with the same characters and similar locations, but a different story. For instance, if you actually manage to find and defeat Bilan before he escapes the ship, your adventure on Jaller's Island will revolve around something completely different.

The Parallel System is a sprightly cool idea, and adds huge replay value to the game. Each parallel has its own specific locations and events (e.g. parallels 3 & 4 have an awesome poly-



R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - CLIMAX
PUBLISHER - SEGA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - RARE
AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
Really? Let
me look that
up...



HYPERION PERSPECTIVE

Landskater may have been locked in an isometric perspective, but *Dark Savior* isn't. While the main characters and objects are all traditional hand-drawn sprites, the environment is created out of texture-mapped polygons, allowing the player the freedom to manipulate the game camera at any time. Sometimes hidden objects are revealed, and sometimes it's handy just to check that Garian is in line for a jump—it's a solution to the age-old isometric problem of depth perception. Even better, if you play with the NIGHTS pad, the analog controller can be used to control the view, while the regular pad controls Garian! An analog camera? Excellent!



gon mine cart sequence – the best ever!) and the way the storyline of each parallel sees in with all the others is quite ingenious.

Even though *Dark Savior* has one, or rather five, of the coolest stories ever to grace an RPG, the multiple plot lines are not the game's strongest feature. The game engine is. Like *Landskater*, the world of *Dark Savior* is primarily viewed from a 3/4 isometric viewpoint. Climax has acknowledged the weaknesses of an isometric camera (lots of blind spots), and has found a solution in the aptly named Hyperion Perspective (see below). Creating the environment out of texture-mapped polygons not only gives the landscape a more solid, realistic feel, but it also allows for the game camera to be manipulated.

However, what really impresses is the way Garian interacts with the environment. Even though Garian is a flat sprite in a 3D world, he is incredibly responsive, and navigates the terrain as accurately and as fluently as any action/platformer character. He can run, jump, turn in mid-air, grab ladders in mid-jump and attack at any time—just like an action character, but in a vast, detailed, 3D RPG world!

If there is one downside to the Hyperion Perspective, it's that the character sprites sometimes look a little flat against the polygon landscape, but only when you move the game camera around. Other than that the graphics are all first rate, and the blend of animated sprites and polygon backdrop is almost seamless. The soundtrack is also excellent, with numerous atmospheric tracks that perfectly complement the game's many locations. *Dark Savior* looks and sounds just like you'd expect a 32-bit *Landskater* to look and sound – amazing!

Before I wrap up I do have a couple of minor criticisms, and I wish I'd be doing my job if I didn't point them out. First, although *Dark Savior* has some touch seconds, most good action game players will have the game licked in a few days' play (non-stop mind you). Second, the 2D combat system, though fun, is not as polished as the rest of the game. And third, I thought it was a little sad the way SOA cleaned up the island's currency. Cigarettes are now "chocolate bars," whisky bottles are now "bottles" and porno mags have become "scary magazines." But, hey, I guess I should just be grateful that the game got a translation at all, and that Spencer Nislon didn't change the soundtrack.

Despite these criticisms, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend *Dark Savior* to any and all Saturn adventure fans. It's an epic experience, and like all great games, once you start playing you don't want to stop. There's a distinct lack of decent Saturn RPGs over here at the moment (*Shining Wisdom*, *Legend of Oassis*, *Blazing Heroes* and er... that's it), so *Dark Savior* should be greeted with open arms. One thing's for sure: Landskater fans are going to flip!



BLACK DAWN

So many PS to Saturn conversions, so little time. Unlike many previous efforts, however, *Black Dawn* has lost very little in the translation. Come to think of it, *Black Dawn*, in any form, is of high enough quality to be a success based on its fine gameplay alone.

Only a handful of chopper sims have seen the light of day on 32-bit systems, and of those few, only a couple ever merited a passing grade. *Black Dawn* is the best one I've seen thus far. Whether it be the fine control necessary to tightly maneuver intense battlefields, or perfectly balanced action and strategy, *Black Dawn's* got it all. The Saturn version admirably attempts to replicate the cel-shaded shading and light-sourcing of the PS version, with very little lost in

the synthetic re-creation. Similarly, the frame rate, although running a few notches slower than its PS brethren, still pushes the game along at pleasant speeds. Finally, the sound, including a brilliant Tellarico soundtrack, is fantastic.

In terms of gameplay, *Black Dawn* offers up many involving missions around the globe. For example, one mission has you rescuing hostages (Choplifter style) while

all around you a battle is being waged between the local police force, the army, and scores of bad-guys. Another level involves the destruction of several key communications outposts.

Yeah, that's a cliché mission in flight games, but *Black Dawn's* flight controls (especially its strafing and ascending/descending) are so damn fine-tuned that any mission is a joy to play.

The bottom line: Saturn owners looking for the best chopper game to ever hit the system will be extremely satisfied with *Black Dawn*. It never amazes, but it will consistently supply you with solid gameplay. JS

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - BLACK OPS

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

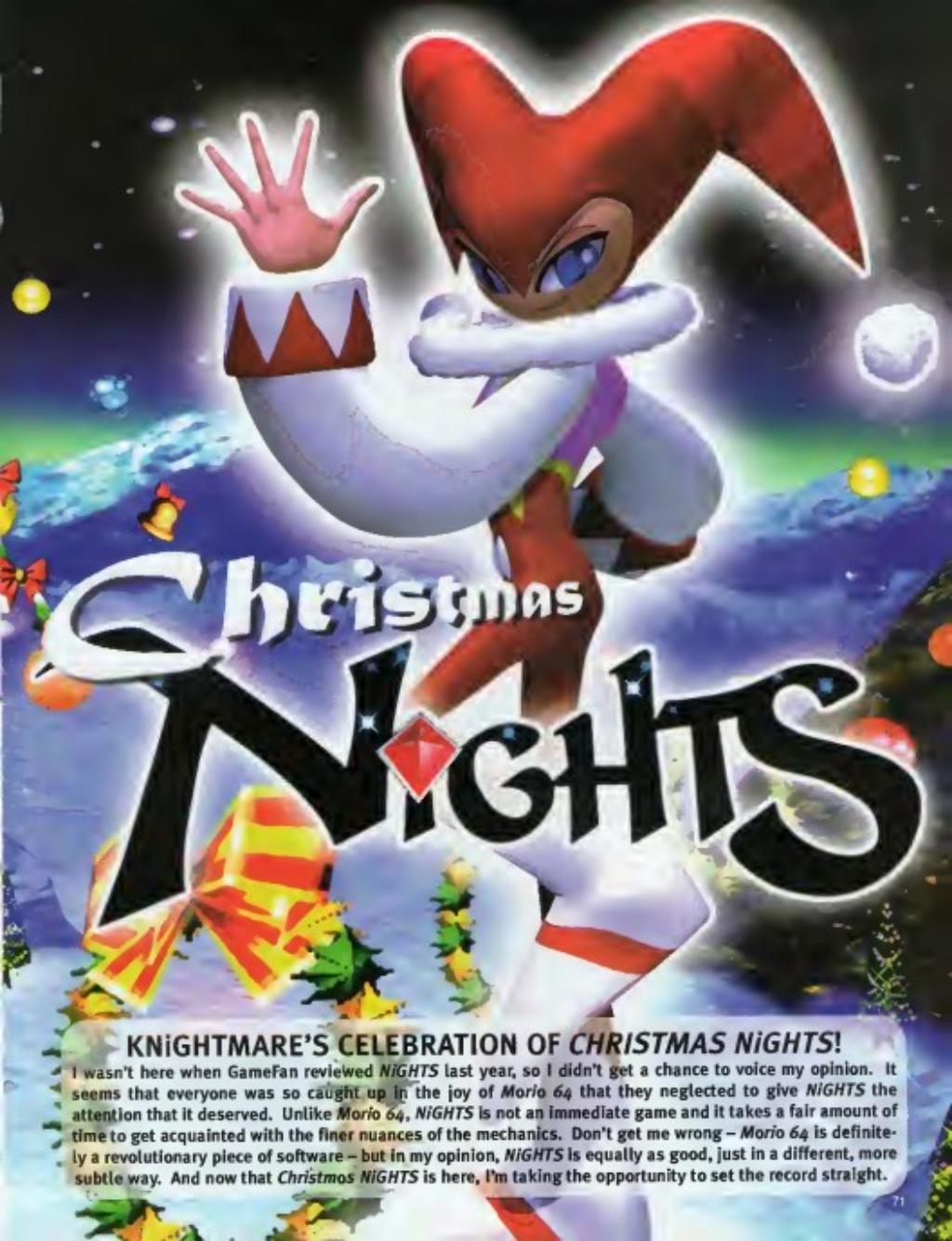
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
BLACK OPS
DOES IT
AGAIN...



KNIGHTMARE'S CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS NiGHTS!

I wasn't here when GameFan reviewed *NiGHTS* last year, so I didn't get a chance to voice my opinion. It seems that everyone was so caught up in the joy of *Mario 64* that they neglected to give *NiGHTS* the attention that it deserved. Unlike *Mario 64*, *NiGHTS* is not an immediate game and it takes a fair amount of time to get acquainted with the finer nuances of the mechanics. Don't get me wrong — *Mario 64* is definitely a revolutionary piece of software — but in my opinion, *NiGHTS* is equally as good, just in a different, more subtle way. And now that *Christmas NiGHTS* is here, I'm taking the opportunity to set the record straight.

1. KARAOKE

There are those at the GameFan office who don't seem to appreciate my rendition of "Dreams... Dreams". Come to think of it, they didn't really appreciate the tune in the first place. Personally, I love it, but then heck, what do I know? I liked the original Daytona USA tunes!



2/3. LINK & TIME
In the LINK ATTACK, NIGHTS is given a free run around Frozen Bell course one, in an attempt to rack up as large a link in as few laps as possible. In the TIME ATTACK, NIGHTS is once again given free run, this time around Spring Valley course one, with the aim being to complete a lap and collect all 29 objects in as short a time as possible.

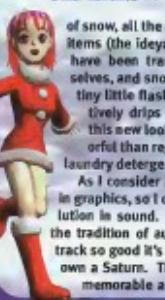


The story behind *Christmas NIGHTS* goes something like this. Back in summer 1996 Sega rush released *NIGHTS* to get it out in time to do battle with *Mario 64*. Because of the rush, Sonic Team had a lot of ideas left over that they didn't get to implement (particularly the calendar-sensitive dates). So instead of waiting for the sequel, Yuji Naka approached Sega with the idea of producing a non-profit making seasonal *NIGHTS* disk – incorporating all of their left over ideas – as a gift to loyal Sega owners. Sega approved and the result is before you. I mean, does Sega love you or what??!

At its most basic level, *Christmas NIGHTS* can be seen as a one-dream-and-one-boss demo of *NIGHTS* (two if you count Elliot's brand new course through Spring Valley) with calendar-sensitive seasonal trimmings. But in truth, it goes much further than that. The new story, the new hand-drawn CG, the new courses, and especially all the presents constitute an entirely new *NIGHTS* experience. For a fan like me, it's almost too good to be true!



Go on, pick me! I'm CLARIS!!



The first thing to strike you when you boot up *Christmas NIGHTS* is the graphics. From the title screen to the boss stage, *Christmas NIGHTS* gives *NIGHTS* a complete aesthetic makeover. Spring Valley is covered in a blanket of snow, all the characters wear Christmas clothes, all of the level items (the ideya palace, the balloon claw, the Nightopians, etc.) have been transformed into festive representations of themselves, and snow falls constantly, lighting up the ground in tiny little flashes where it lands. *Christmas NIGHTS* positively drips with Yuletide atmosphere, and if anything this new look is even more vibrant and colorful than regular *NIGHTS* (sounds like a laundry detergent ad doesn't it?).

As I consider *Mario 64* to be a revolution in graphics, so I consider *NIGHTS* to be a revolution in sound. *Christmas NIGHTS* continues the tradition of aural excellence with a soundtrack so good it's worth getting even if you don't own a Saturn. The all new Winter tunes are as memorable as anything in regular *NIGHTS*,



4. NIGHTOPIAN COLLECTION

Yay! Now this what we've been waiting for. The A-Life analyzer allows you to take a look at all of the Nightopians and Meepians (mutants) on a level, and informs you of their collective and individual disposition. When they're all happy, they sing the *NIGHTS* theme! If you have the full version of *NIGHTS*, you can also see the A-Life for all six regular *NIGHTS* levels! Too cool!



**R
REVIEW**



DEVELOPER - SEGA

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
DOES SEGA LOVE US
OR WHAT??



5. MELODY BOX

Provided you have the full version of NIGHTS, the Melody Box gives you what all NIGHTS fans have been waiting for: the ability to mix your own NIGHTS tunes! The soundtrack for each level is made up of multiple (six or seven) bars of music, and each bar has four different strains depending on how happy the Nightopians are. Sega included this just for me.



with a brilliant redbook remix of *Jingle Bells* for Christmas time, and an oompahlo version of *Dreams Dreams* when you complete the game.

Elliot's new dream (basically a new level) is a feast for NIGHTS players hungry for new courses, with potential for two continuous links and a reverse clockwise path for Gillwing. The intro and outro (hand drawn for a warmer feel) are cool, even if the American version does have an incredibly irritating female voice over (you can almost hear her smile). Sonic Team has also removed some of NIGHTS' bugs and tweaked the gameplay a little to make it more enjoyable.

6. SONIC

Sonic into Dreams! Why the hell not? Rather than fly around Spring Valley, Sonic runs around with a super double jump to snag those hard-to-reach chips. The boss for this section is Puffy, who's been made up to look like Dr. Robotnik! What's more, the boss music is actually taken from the final boss in the import version of Sonic CD!



I wish had the space to talk about the fluid, intuitive gameplay, but if I want to fit all the presents in I'd better stop now. The bottom line is this: *Christmas NIGHTS* is an indispensable companion to NIGHTS and a super cool product in its own right. I'm stunned at the amount of effort that's been put into this. It represents an unprecedented display of generosity and respect from Sega to its fans, and let's face it, you don't see a free Christmas Mario or Crash, do you now?

K



7/8/9. MUSEUM MOVIES & GOODS

The NIGHTS museum features over 50 pieces of awesome NIGHTS art, all lovingly rendered in 16-bit, while the two movies are remakes of the NIGHTS CG. GOODS is a catalog of NIGHTS merchandise, including cuddly toys and the infamous NIGHTS cap: the cherished possession of all true NIGHTS fans! And no matter what anyone tells you, I don't put on the cap and pretend to fly around when no one's looking. It's just not true, all right?



10. REALIA

Just when you think you've found all the presents in *Christmas NIGHTS*, along comes Realia to prove otherwise. Just play the game on April 1st and a new option appears on your presents screen - REALIA! Now you too can fly around Spring Valley as NIGHTS' arch enemy, executing hapless Nightopians without a shred of conscience. Muu ha ha ha! "There goes one paw!"

Pick me please
I'm ELLIOT!!

SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

GOES TO HOLLYWOOD



When GameFan reviewed the PlayStation version of *Spot Goes to Hollywood* last year, it got a bit of a kicking. I didn't play it then and so had nothing to go on but my fellow editors' opinions. So when the Saturn version finally came in (over two years late!) I expected the worst.

Spot kicks off with an awesome rendered intro (among the best I've ever seen) involving a bubble floating down over Hollywood into a movie theater, and *Spot* getting sucked into the big screen. It's a lot grainier than it was on PS, but the frame rate is high and it's full screen. In fact, all of the CG scenes in *SGTH* are first class. Maybe that's what took Virgin so long.

Once I got into the game itself I was pleasantly surprised. *Spot* is actually pretty good fun to play. The mixture of pre-rendered backdrops and traditional hand-drawn animated sprites works well, while Tommy Tallarico's John Williams-esque soundtrack perfectly captures the cinematic mood of the game. The levels are varied and challenging, and *Spot* himself is actually very responsive (E. Storm believes the control has been improved for the Saturn version).

Unfortunately, the main problem that plagued the PS version of *SGTH* makes a return on the Saturn. Because of the isometric perspective, the depth perception is portrayed very badly, and sometimes the only way you can tell where things are is by their shadows (which not all objects have). An extra lift that looks like it's on the ground at the top of the screen may actually be in the air in the middle. It's very frustrating to die just because you can't tell where the next platform is supposed to be.

Other than that, I like *Spot*. The different movie settings are cool, and finding all the hidden levels and stars provides quite a challenge. The restart points are well positioned and you can return to any completed level at any time to hunt for stars. I still believe that isometric platform games are a bad idea in principle, but somehow *Spot* manages to rise above the shortcomings of its genre and become a decent little action/platform game. Not worth two years wait, but not bad either. K

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - ZURST

(See pg. 108)

OF PLAYERS - 1

(See pg. 108)

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
IF ONLY THE VIEW
WAS SPOT ON...



A GAME THAT ACTUALLY DOES THE MOVIE BETTER

DRAGONHEART

FIRE & STEEL



Even though *DragonHeart* wasn't that good a movie, you've got to admit, it's still pretty good source material for a video game. A valiant knight teaming up with a fire-breathing dragon to fight a powerful tyrant and his evil army? There's a lot of potential there. So it comes as no surprise to learn that the license-meisters at Acclaim have snatched up the rights to the home versions and released both a PS and a Saturn version of

DragonHeart to ride the Christmas wave (a little late to cash in on the movie, methinks).

DragonHeart is a 2D action/platform game in the same mold as *Skeleton Warriors*. You take control of a digitized Dennis Quaid (the latest actor to be immortalized in silicon) who must fight his way through multiple side scrolling levels that mirror the plot from the movie. Along the way you'll meet Draco, a fire-breathing dragon who joins you in your



quest after you've beaten him in combat. Once Draco is your ally, you can ride him in 3D FMV sections, or use a horn to summon him during regular play, as kind of a "smart bomb" alternative.

Your character is equipped with a sword and a number of attacks (including a rear stabbing attack like in the movie) and the combat system introduces a new 'strength' bar which actually tires your character while he fights. Attack too much and he pauses to take a breath! It's an incredibly lame idea, and adds frustration to an already fiddly control system. Whoever was responsible should be sat down and made to play *Ghouls 'N Ghouls* and *Castlevania* till

they realize the error of their ways.

DragonHeart has some nice art and some good ideas, but the poor controls and ropy collision detection make the game almost unplayable. In an age where action/platform games have been refined to an art form, *DragonHeart* just fails to impress. K



R
REVIEW


SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - FRONCOM

1 OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

DIFFICULTY - DIFFICULT

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
EVEN THE MOVIE
WAS BETTER...





Puzzle Fighter Experiment Log, Day 1:

A member of Team GameFan enters my lab, handing me a Saturn version of *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*, and the experiment begins. Capcom has presented a rather interesting premise; to make sure their new puzzle game would have instant recognition and appeal, they spliced it in a test tube with genes from *Street Fighter Alpha 2* and *Night Warriors*.

The result? An irresistible puzzle game with somewhat of a fighting game feel. You begin by choosing from a roster of popular Capcom characters, and as you play, your onscreen personae battle it out depending on how you're doing in the game. It's all wrapped up in an extremely cute and light-hearted package, and I especially appreciate super-deformed Lei-Lei, who is so adorable that I cannot get her out of my thoughts (*Note to myself: Get out of lab more often.*)

Day 2: As I examine *Puzzle Fighter* closer, I begin to notice that it is a pretty simple creation. Gameplay is

very reminiscent of many before it, doing little to be original or groundbreaking. Colored gems fall from the sky, you match them up with others of their kind, and your goal is to make them vanish by using the spheres which rid any similarly colored gems they touch. As I play, however, I find that while the game itself may not be revolutionary, it is an enjoyable experience. Yet, I seem to detect a deeper, more primal attraction to

this game; the sheer joy of demolishing your opponent, and seeing your onscreen character do the same to their opponent, gives you a feeling of superiority and strength. Interesting.

Day 3: I find myself unable to stop playing. Each time I play, I tell myself that this will be my last game, but, upon losing, my thumb rapidly taps the start button to play again, no longer under my control.

I am getting almost no sleep, and my mind can no longer think... er, think straight.

Day 4: Itchy. Tasty.



R
REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

1-2

ADJUSTABLE

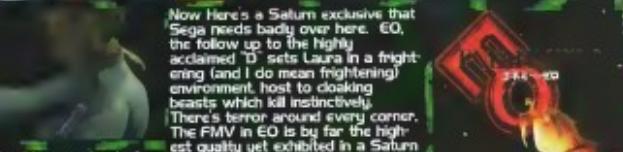
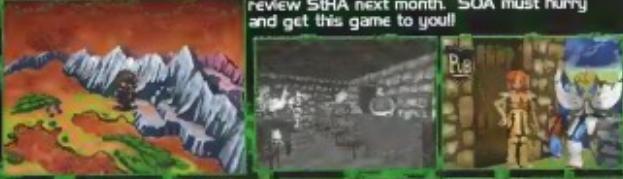
JANUARY '97



SHIDOSHI
LEI-LEI (\$60)
LEI-LEI ("WE
GOT TO GET
OUT MORE!")

Sega's SATURN Previews

Games like this could put Sega back on top. Sonic Software Planning's sequel to *Shining in the Darkness*, *Shining the Holy Ark*, is the best 1st person RPG I've ever played. The CG and polygonal environments are incredible, the movement fluid, and the battles... magnificent. I was expecting a good game to play over Christmas break, but what I got is beyond great. The environments now include real time towns, forests, and dungeons with amazing depth. We'll review SHIA next month. SOA must hurry and get this game to you!



Now here's a Saturn exclusive that Sega needs badly over here. EO, the follow up to the highly acclaimed "D" sets Laura in a frightening (and I do mean frightening) environment, host to cloaking beasts which kill instinctively. There's terror around every corner. The FMV in EO is by far the highest quality yet exhibited in a Saturn title and the game is just too cool. We'll review EO next month and hopefully report on a US version.



The REAL TIME polygonal dungeons in EO add a new level of gameplay to Kenji Eno's 2nd horror epic. There's nothing quite like battling something you can hear, but not see...





STARFOX

AVAILABLE 2ND QTR.
96 MEGI
AIR/GROUND ASSAULT
1-4 PLAYERS!



I can't believe Nintendo decided to launch the N64 without the game that first put "Nintendo" and "polygons" in the same sentence. It's going to be a longer wait than I had hoped, but *StarFox* 64 is, at long last, a reality.

The storyline is hardly a new direction; it's actually a remake of the original *StarFox*, not a sequel, and has the same plot. But a few of the game mechanics do take the series in a slightly new direction. Intended as an intermediate step between the 1993 original and the long-since-scraped *StarFox 2*, *StarFox 64* has both straight-ahead, forced-scrolling levels, and go-anywhere-type Cybermorph levels. In these new, free-flying levels, Fox and crew are usually dog-lighting with a group of enemies, or attacking some ground installation. While not quite as action-packed as the standard levels, these levels put your flight skills to a much more rigorous test than the standard levels do.

Another noteworthy addition is the new, ground-based tank levels. In these, Fox rides alone on the ground, while Peppy, Slippy, and Falco provide the air support. The tank controls pretty much like the ships, but with the ability to suddenly roll left or right via the Z-Trigger and R-Button. Third, Fox, Peppy, Slippy and Falco can have a go at each others' fury thrusters in the special 4-player battle mode, à la *Mario Kart*. And speaking of McCloud's companions, they actually talk this time around. Not the "blip blip beep bloop" speech they had in the original, but actual speech in actual... Japanese (well, for now).

Visually, *StarFox* is exactly what you'd expect from the N64. The frame rate is high, the textures are fantastic, and the polygon bosses and bomb effects are phenomenal. The real time intermissions, which now feature fully modeled characters (not just ships), are impressive displays of the N64's polygon capabilities. Not so impressive are the deep space levels, which, free of fog, have some very unsightly pop-up. But Nintendo's still got a month or two to go before *StarFox 64* goes into production, so let's hope they can do something about that. Judging by what we've seen thus far I can't imagine *StarFox* doing anything less than yet another legendary Nintendo 64 game.



MORE THAN A
MERE GAME,
STARFOX
WILL BE AN
EVENT!

ZAB-ZABA, VOLABUBA



"THEY WIN" -
E. STORM/KID
FAN, GAMEFAN
MAGAZINE

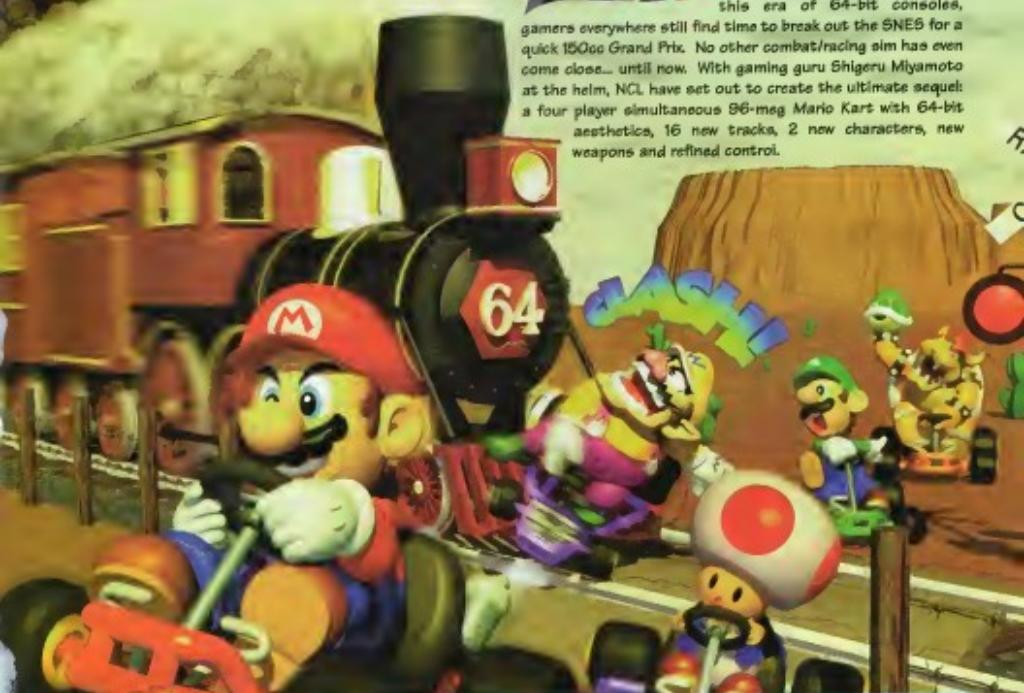


NINTENDO THEATER 64

MARIO KART 64 マリオカート64

Super Mario Kart is one of the best-selling Super NES carts of all time, and with good reason: It's absolutely brilliant! SMK's balanced structure and perfect handling give it near infinite replay value, and even in this era of 64-bit consoles,

gamers everywhere still find time to break out the SNES for a quick 150cc Grand Prix. No other combat/racing sim has even come close... until now. With gaming guru Shigeru Miyamoto at the helm, NCL have set out to create the ultimate sequel: a four player simultaneous 96-meg Mario Kart with 64-bit aesthetics, 16 new tracks, 2 new characters, new weapons and refined control.



DEVELOPER - NINTENDO

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - 96-MEG CART

AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



KNIGHTMARE

IT'S GOOD...
BUT NOT
SMX GOOD...

MARIO KART 64 REDEFINES MULTI-PLAYER ACTION!



I can't believe I'm writing this. More so the point, I can't believe I'm playing this. Not six months after the N64's debut, and already Nintendo has given me a 64-bit sequel to my favorite SNES game of all time. Mario Kart 64 is an SME lover's dream come true, and even though it has some problems, it's still light years ahead of anything else in its genre.

Ok, let's start with the graphics. You can get a sense of the visual quality from the accompanying screen shots, but (and I hate to use a cliché) wait till you see this baby moving. In one player mode, it's pure 30 fps texture-mapped joy, with awesomely-animated, rendered characters, detailed tracks and the best use of color this side of NIGHTS. From the moment you hit start you know that this is 64-bit power: mipmapping, anti-aliasing, seamlessly scaling sprites – no other system can touch this. I'm not a fan of the rendered 'plastic,' but it seems to work here.

The music was composed by NCL's in-house maestro, Koji Kondo, and bops along happily in the background, with a frantic final lap remix to add tension. The sound effects are of a similarly high

"KAWAII WHO PUT THESE SORROW NOTES
DO THEY MEANT GET MOUNTAIN HIGH!"



quality, and I particularly like the way your kart produces visual cartoon 'effects,' like 'BOING' when you jump, or the letters that come off your tires when you power-slide.

16 tracks may not seem like a lot (the original had 20) but these are longer and more spectacular than anything in SMK. You'll recognize a lot of the locations from SMK, but I guarantee you've never seen them look like this. Bowser's castle has fire-breathing statues and crushing Thwomps, the Ghost House has a swarm of bats, and there's even a free-way track where you have to dodge between moving traffic! In order to accommodate the new analog



control system, these tracks are wider and easier than anything in SMK, and lack the intricacy and cunning of some of SMK's more challenging courses. Case in point: Rainbow Road has no difficult turns, and in 50cc mode takes around 10 minutes to complete!

For me, the biggest question hanging over Mario Kart 64 was how would the analog stick affect the SNES control

16 KRAZY KART KOURSES TO GO KRAZY ON!!



MARIO KART 64



"HE'S LOOKING FOR YOU! HURRY!
LET THIS GANZI GO THROUGH!"

system (one of the finest in existence)? Well, for the most part, the answer is amazingly well. The karts now respond much more realistically than in SMK, and while this is 99% a good thing, SMK experts may find it tough to adapt. If you want to swerve to avoid an item, you have to start turning much earlier. The power sliding system is a work of genius (hop into the slide), but the speed you gain



is only marginal, and because the courses are so wide, it's rarely necessary. As a result, the game is much easier to just pick up and play than SMK, but the difference between an expert and novice player is not acute.

This change is further emphasized by a shift in game structure. The different physical attributes of the various characters are much more subtle than in SMK, and because driving is easier (even on 150cc) the strategic emphasis has switched from speed to weapons. Collecting and



using the various new power-ups is as important as driving fast, and although some Gamefan editors seem to like that, personally I prefer a race to be about driving skill rather than getting lucky with a random power-up.

"ZIP-A-HY WEE, PUSSELL!
I'M THE ONLY KART AROUND HERE!"

There are some problems with the CPU AI (the enemy karts in Grand Prix cheat massively to keep pace no matter what speed you go) but, unlike SMK, Grand Prix isn't where it's at. Mario Kart 64 has been designed as a multiplayer bonanza, and it's in four player mode that the game really comes into its own. Even though there is a sacrifice in detail and frame rate (has 64-bit reached its limit already?), alongside Bomberman this is one of the most enjoyable four player console games I've ever experienced. The battle mode (with four specifically designed tracks) is also a great addition, and really takes on a life of its own with four players. It's an ideal party game, and something that every gamer should experience.

So Mario Kart 64 is yet another superb title from the Miyamoto stable. In my opinion it's not as finely tuned as SMK (I prefer the balance to be on racing), but the four player mode pretty much makes up for that. It's a shame that there are no extra options to allow you to fix the balance yourself (e.g. number of laps, frequency of weapons, etc.) or that the only reward you get for beating the game is a minor mode, but these criticisms all fall by the wayside when you get into joy of a 4 player battle. I'm a little disappointed at the new balance, but I still think this is the best N64 game after Mario 64, and a must-buy for SMK fans. Just be prepared for the words 'hot' and 'fair' to cross your lips more than once. K

2, 3 OR 4 PLAYER KARTING JOY!



SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE



It's a testament to Star Wars' undying popularity that a spin-off story can create the same merchandise as a movie. We've got *SOTE* action figures, a comic book, a soundtrack, a fan club, and you guessed it, a video game.

Set in the period between *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, *SOTE* (the game at least) tells the story of a smuggler named Dash Rendar, a mercenary who gets caught up in an evil Prince's plan to replace Darth Vader as the Emperor's right hand man. Like the SNES Star Wars games before it, *Shadows of the Empire* is a multi-genre title that incorporates a number of different game styles over its 10 large levels. Let's have a look, shall we?

SNOW SPEEDER (Level 1) - If you were impressed by the Mode 7 Hoth battle scene in *Super Empire Strikes Back*, wait till you get a load of this!! Awesome visuals, silky smooth frame rate, perfect control, and sampled sound. What more could a Star Wars fan ask for?! The 3D models of all the vehicles are remarkably authentic and even though the AT-AT's do seem to moon walk, this is probably my favorite section of *SOTE*. A great way to kick off.

THESE BOSSSES ARE TOUGH! BOBA FETT AND HIS BOUNTY HUNTER CRUMBS CAN KILL YOU IN SECONDS! TAKE COVER, DASH!

OUTRIDER (Levels 3 and 10) - Another stage taken directly from *Super Empire Strikes Back* and given a face lift. Blasting asteroids and TIE fighters on level three is fun, but it pales in comparison with the epic space battle on level 10. You are given full control of Dash's ship, and get to fly around Xizor's space station while X-wings, TIE Fighters, Star Vipers, a Star Destroyer and even the Millennium Falcon all do battle around you! Best of all, after you take out Skyhook's gun turrets, you actually get to fly inside the space station and blow



**R
REVIEW**

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - LUCASFILM

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - 10 MB CART

E OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
THE NINTENDO
SIXTY-FORCE WILL
BE WITH YOU...
ALWAYS...

up the reactor core, just like *Return of the Jedi*! It's worth buying the game just for this section alone!!

SWOOP BIKE (Level 6) - Even though this is definitely the weakest stage in the game, it's kind of grown on me. Control of the swoop bike is initially very awkward, and the way it responds to obstacles is incredibly frustrating. But once you get the hang of it, you can hit some pretty incredible speeds. The graphics are smooth, and it's nice to finally be able to see what Beggars Canyon looks like.

DASH RENDAR (Levels 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) - *SOTE's* first-person perspective scenes are obviously influenced by LucasArts' other 3D Star Wars shooter, *Dark Forces*. They share the same control (jump, duck, look, etc.) and trademark *Star Wars* sound effects. Unlike *Dark Forces*, however, *SOTE* gives you multiple camera angles so you can actually see Dash in the third person, *Jumba Jumbler* style. Nice idea in principle, but in practice LucasArts have failed to make a system which works for both cameras.

The analog stick works well for steering, but otherwise movement and control of Dash is unwieldy. Plus, I can't believe LucasArts didn't allow you to customize your own buttons. All the available configurations have problems, and although you do get used to it, control is still weak.

Each of the 6 corridor levels has a unique setting, and range from the rebel base on Hoth to Prince Xizor's palace. They are well designed and immerse the player in an impressive 3D environment while keeping the ambient *Star Wars* 'feel'. The N64's graphical muscle is put to good use, with realistically animated polygon characters, mip-mapped textures, epic (read: huge) environments and a smooth (but not super smooth) frame rate. There is mist, but only in the very far distance, and it doesn't detract from the gameplay in any way.



All of the stages are united by a consistent graphical and audio theme, and even though the mechanics change from level to level, you don't feel like you're playing a different game. The 15 minutes of sampled audio works much better than you'd expect, and the looped tunes are only really noticeable on long levels, like Gall Spaceport.

Overall, although it has its problems, *SOTE* manages to be greater than the sum of its parts. Even though there are only ten levels, the variable difficulty settings and hidden challenge points add replayability. Apparently, *SOTE* was sent to Miyamoto for evaluation, and he replied with a list of fixes which LucasArts only half implemented. If this is the case, then LucasArts have only themselves to blame. I'd say that *SOTE* is good game (make that a very good game), but not a classic. For *Star Wars* fans and N64 owners it's definitely a good buy (in my opinion the best after *Mario 64* and *WaveRace*) but with a few changes it could have been something really special.

HAVE YOU FOUND ALL THE CHALLENGE POINTS YET?
FIND THEM ALL ON MEDIUM AND HARD SETTINGS TO DISCOVER GAME SECRETS!
DON'T BE A JUNK GAMER WHO WHIPS OUT AND PLAYS IT ON EASY. WUSS!

K Killer Instinct Gold



We've been waiting for an N64 version of *Killer Instinct* since the arcade original was first released, but no-one really quite knew what to expect. Would it be worse? Would it be exact? Well, no actually, it would be better! In their first stab at N64 development, Rare has once again achieved the impossible and converted a \$2000 arcade game to a \$70 N64 cartridge... and improved it!

Ok, let's before opinion. *KI Gold* is an enhanced conversion of the *KI2* coin-op, with the same number of playable characters (11 including Gargos), the same game engine and a few exclusive features, including a training mode, a practice mode (where you can see your moves like *Tekken 2*), gold/shadow characters and a host of new gameplay options (cheap juggles, early ultimates, quick openers) that can be turned on or off.



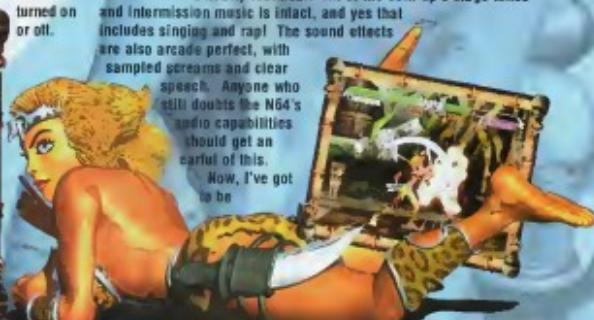
Graphically, Rare has done a great job of cramming the coin-op into a 96-meg cart, and even though there had to be some compromises, it still looks remarkably faithful to the coin-op. About 10% of the animation frames have been cut due to memory constraints, and in order to keep the frame rate up, the anti-aliasing had to be turned off. However, to make up for this there are more colors in the rendered characters, different camera angles, smoother scaling and better transparencies than the arcade. And all at a silky smooth 60 FPS.

The biggest surprise, however, are the all new real-time 3D polygon backgrounds which look (in my opinion) every bit as impressive as the arcades pre-rendered backdrops. Jago's bridge and T.J. Combo's street are outstanding, and I particularly like the way the camera swoops down through the castle hall at the start of Sabrewulf's stage.

KI2 had great music, and despite what you may have heard, *KI Gold*'s music is nearly identical. All of the coin-op's stage tunes and intermission music is intact, and yes that includes singing and rap! The sound effects

are also arcade perfect, with sampled streams and clear speech. Anyone who still doubts the N64's audio capabilities should get an earful of this.

Now, I've got
to be



R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - RARE

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW

KNIGHTMARE
Look, in ULTRA
COMBOOOOO!
Night... There
for some test
back in that!



honest with you: I'm not the

biggest fan of *K'1*'s hybrid gameplay. There's no doubt that *K'1* fights are fast, furious and brutal, but I'm not that keen on the million hit+ ultra combo system... I appreciate that long combos are tough, and that the longer they get, the easier they are to break, but it's just not my style. It's cool that you can start a combo from the ground, take it into the air, then finish it back on the ground, but in my opinion every hit of a combo should be earned. I mean, you can pull off some pretty amazing stuff just by wiggle the pad and tapping the buttons randomly (though, admittedly, that won't get you very far against a *K'1* pro). There's a standing joke in the office that when Enqueen or Hikaru start a combo on you, you can go and make a cup of coffee, drink it, come back, and the combo still

won't have finished!

I suppose what it comes down to is what type of gameplay you feel comfortable with... People who criticize *K'1* without having ever played it are as foolish as those who praise it without recognizing its faults. There's a lot of technique in there, almost like an SNK style beat-'em-up, and those ridiculous combos are equally as difficult to pull off in a two player battle... Personally, I prefer the balance and timing of the Street Fighter series, but that's just me.

For what it is, and what it does, I would have to command *K'1 Gold* as a decent fighting game. If you're a *K'1* fan, then this review is pointless. You've already bought it. If you're not a *K'1* fan, and you're in the market for an N64 beat-'em-up, I'd recommend this over *MK Trilogy* any day of the week.

Cruis'n USA



ally affects the gameplay. The only other two player mode this bad is in *Daytona CCE*, and that at least kept the frame rate up.

The bottom line is: If you liked *Cruis'n USA* in the arcades, you're going to like this. It's the only racing game available for the N64 at the moment, and I suppose it is kind of fun... for like, 5 minutes. But for the rest of us, *Cruis'n USA* is a substandard racing sim... that offers little depth. I look at *Rage Racer* on 32-bit hardware and I look at *Cruis'n USA* on 64-bit and I wonder, where's the leap? The worst N64 game yet, and the second chink in the N64's armor. K



R
REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - WILLIAMS
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO
FORMAT - 64 MEG CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW



K.N.I.T.H.M.A.R.E.
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THE ARCADES...

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AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAMS ENT.



TRANSMISSION BEGINS

Folks, welcome one and all to Chief Gunner Hamblin's interview with the team responsible for the upcoming conversion of Doom for the Nintendo 64. Infatuating numero uno buster guards and horrific frosty mutations, I was granted an audience with two of the team. During the time I spent with these two chaps, we ordered Mexican food, played an almost-complete version of Doom 64 (which incidentally was stunning), and even talked at length about Quake's Turd. The following rows are abounding for anyone even remotely interested in jumping up a mini-gun and cutting down masses of put-afire horrors like Red. Okay then. Let's rock! Who are those two bony matines I see striding out of the mist?

AS: My name is Aaron Seeler. I'm the lead programmer on Doom for the Nintendo 64.

SG: My name is Sukru Gilman. I'm a lead artist on Doom 64.

CH: Good to meet you. Right, let us begin. For this conversion, how long have you been working on it, and what percentage of it is complete?

AS: The game has been in development since about the beginning of the year, around January, or late December, so it's been about a year. We've been in production earlier than that, though.

CH: So is this a conversion?

AS: It's a bit of a mislabel to call it a conversion, because it very much is a new Doom. It's not a Doom 2.

SG: We're not using any of the old stuff.

CH: So what would you say; it's 50% complete?

AS: On no, it's much further than that. I would say it's maybe closer to being around 90%.

CH: When is it due to release?

AS: I think it's been targeted for the first quarter of '97.

CH: So would you probably say around March?

SG: Probably. Around then.

CH: How many people do you have working on it?

AS: Around eight.

SG: We have three level designers, and we have about three artists.

CH: Did you use any of the code from the PC or PlayStation versions, or did you start from scratch? Is there anything that you used from other versions?

AS: Well, I was the lead programmer on the PlayStation version, so a lot of the work I had done there really gave me a good chance to know the game inside and out, so a portion of that was used; basically some of the core game algorithms which gives Doom its definitive characteristics. That was pretty it. The Nintendo 64 version has a whole new rendering engine and a fair amount of the game logic got reworked, basically to take advantage more of the N64 architecture; it's got a floating point unit and it was changed in a number of areas to help it move a lot faster. So a lot of the code got changed.

CH: Were there any of the core elements that got changed?

AS: There were a few core elements that got changed...
SG: ...a lot of custom things...

AS: ...yeah, I mean the... I'm really not sure how to describe it, the stuff that gives Doom some of its behavior, I mean things that you would expect, but a lot of things got reworked and changed and are a lot better.

CH: For the people who have played Doom before, would they expect the monsters to remain and move in a similar sort of manner?

AS: Yes, they're going to be moving in a similar sort of manner, there would be recognizable behavior, basically good Doom players are going to see that.

CH: It's just going to look a lot more impressive...?

AS: It's going to look and act a lot more impressively. It will be far more responsive, much smoother than the PC version, and a lot of the quirky Doom bugs have been taken care of.

CH: How much of a free reign did you have for this project, or were id (the creators of the game) quite stringent about

what they wanted to see?

AS: In the beginning, they sort of set us on some sort of direction, they wanted us to be true to what Doom was originally we had a lot of ideas and we were going to take Doom in a different direction, and they were very like; "No, Doom is like this, don't screw with the equation too much, you can do this and this and this..."

CH: Because I heard that you had seen intention to create a slightly different look from id's original plans...

AS: Yeah, we went off and we had sort of a minor, like tangent; we thought we would add more different types of architectural elements because we wanted to exploit the N64, to map up a bunch of architecture and bring it in, and then we like, "Cool, but that's not really Doom."

SG: They said, "Why don't you try it?" and they saw it, and said; "...oh, that's too cool for us, but why not try this?"

AS: It was very Hell-oriented. Id was very particular about their game, and I understand perfectly, but we were allowed to experiment with some areas of the game which were changed, and then we'd do some stuff, and the stuff that they saw they were very pleased with, and at that point they basically said, "Okay, you guys are on track," you know, keep going in this direction, and it will come out really well.

CH: What size is the cartridge going to be finally?

AS: 8 megabytes.

CH: Does the Doom 64 engine allow for 3D level design?

AS: Close... I would say it's hybrid 3D. It's 3D because that's what the N64 polygon engine is. Whereas the PC was a 2D hack, the levels are 3D now. There's restrictions that we put on it to maintain what Doom was, there's no look up and look down, I mean those things aren't Doom, there's no flying around, for example. The stuff can do, but it won't because the game wouldn't have been Doom then.

CH: Can you for example, walk on a platform, jump down, turn back on yourself and walk on another platform?

AS: You'll see... Yes there are areas in the levels where there are basically underpasses and overpasses.

CH: Are all the levels in Doom 64 really designed?

AS: Yes. There's nothing that's old.

CH: How many levels are there in total?

AS: Approximately 30.

CH: Are these shelter in fashion to the previous Doom levels? Do you have to do the same sorts of things, like find the three keys and then etc?

AS: Yes, but there's more to it now than just the three keys. That data exists because that's part of Doom, but finding the level doesn't just involve getting the keys; there's much more skill and strategy that's involved now. You really have to be in control of the control; just to be able to certain things and certain actions.

CH: A lot of things happen this time and it's pretty difficult. It's not just find the keys and open the door and you're out, you do have to solve different puzzles and you have to be paying attention.

CH: How many secret levels are there going to be? (assuming you can't tell me since they will be secret), but can you give me an indication?

AS: There's a fair amount of secrets that we've put into the game. The player will not be bored looking for secret stuff.

CH: With secret levels, are you going to do sort of ordinary stuff or is there going to be like a theme?

AS: There is something to the secret levels more than just "you found a level, now go and complete it" [like Club Doom on the PlayStation].

CH: Where's the previous experience that your team has had?

AS: The team has been on Doom since the PlayStation.

CH: So you have the same people working on those pleasant sound effects; that music, the babies crying...?

AS: Yeah, the team basically had so much experience doing it, and we thought we did a pretty good job.

CH: The music on the PlayStation version had as much atmosphere to it. It was much better than the sort of jangly tunes of the original PC version.

AS: We wanted a very dark and sinister look for Doom 64,

that's what our strategy was, dark and sinister, so we're trying to deliver that with all of the elements.

CH: Doom 64 had all new designs for the weapons graphically, who's decision was it to redesign them?

AS: That was a Williams Midway thing; that is what we were tasked to do; we were tasked to bring Doom to the N64 in a whole new way, something all new, as all of that was on the art side. In terms of coming up with weapons and the look of the items...

SG: ...like the monsters, for example. The Marauder, it's got some of the features that remind you of the old style Marauder, but it's been redesigned and the animation's been changed. He's still the Marauder, but he's a lot different. And the Plasma Gun, it reminds you of the Plasma Gun but it's been greatly enhanced.

CH: So they're basically just enhanced versions?

AS: We took the elements, and we took what we thought the best part of those elements were, and enhanced and then added to it.

CH: Are all the monsters and weapons exclusive to the N64?

AS: Yes.

CH: So you're not going to be making a cut-down version for PlayStation?

AS: Not that we know of. I mean, who knows? Maybe in the future...

SG: It's just tailored for the N64, I couldn't see it working on anything else.

CH: Are there any specific weapons that we've not seen before?

AS: Yes. We don't want to talk about that, it's part of the plot... Well, it all weaves together...

CH: How are the attributes of the guns compared to previous versions?

AS: For the most part, very similar, and there's new stuff that's going to change slightly. The Plasma Gun is going to work like the rapid-fire gun that you remember...

CH: And the BFG is still going to take out huge boards of mutants...?

AS: But it's going to require understanding how the weapons work a little better in terms of their spray radius and their blast radius. I mean you can just go in and start damage but it's going to be really difficult unless you understand the fine points of the weapons.

CH: What frame rate is the game currently running at?

AS: 30.

CH: Have you used the N64 custom hardware to include graphical effects?

AS: Yes.

CH: What sort of effects can we look for? Maybe light sources?

AS: You'll see light sourcing, filtering and other effects. The alpha channels are heavily used.

CH: Does the N64 version have more frames of animation than before?

AS: Some monsters have, some haven't. Remember that we're making a game that's very large on a PC with unlimited storage and it bogs the RAM. As much as we would have liked to have added a brilliant frame to everything and have made it totally smooth, the reality was that it's still an 8-Meg cartridge and we still wanted a very decent compliment of levels.

CH: Did you have any problems with memory?

AS: Yeah, there were problems, but they've been solved, it's just part of the development process.

CH: People are saying "D64 cartridges can't hold as much as on a CD" which is true, but because you have a CD, people have a tendency to waste memory, like SWK's infamous 200-meg carts that aren't compressed...

AS: Yeah. Every byte is treated very specially on the cart, there's not a whole lot to go around, so it's a very valuable resource, every space is filled with something that is very important to begin with.

CH: How about the N64's sound capabilities?

AS: I couldn't answer that one because one of the other guys on the team does the N64 sound system for me, but

what I got from him is a thumbs up!

CG: Now for a very important question: Is the BFG projectile still green?

AS: The BFG projectile is still green. It's the BFG, you expect it to be green.

CG: On an earlier demo, I saw three marine sprites. How are you going to handle the Deathmatch aspect of Doom 64?

AS: Well, that was handled for us very simply; there's no Deathmatch.

If it couldn't be done right, with is basically with some sort of hardware Interface technology, there was no point to it. We've been ready for some sort of connecting lead for a year and a half; we were ready for it.

CG: I think that's what a lot of people are looking for. Maybe you could put an option for multi-player mode with split screen mode and put something like a dividing board down the middle of the monitor. But that's the main problem: playing a Deathmatch on the same screen is not a Deathmatch.

AS: That was the decision that I came down to. Multi-player is in need time to see for about five minutes, then it's like...

CG: ...I can see you, I know where to shoot.

AS: Yeah, it works well for other games, but not for Doom.

CG: Why? I guess there's answered all of the other

Deathmatch questions that I had them!

AS: I'd like to see you make some comment on that. What do players look for? Many say the Deathmatch, as there's a great deal of fun involved, we tried to take the elements that we couldn't put in for multi-player and add more to single player, so we packed more in there.

CG: And with the three marine sprites, can you give us any clue as to what sort of weapon there, they might be, I dunno, mutated versions of yourself...? Hopefully...

AS: We're playing around with the idea of evil drones, there may be some drone activity...

CG: Does Doom 64 make use of the analog controller? Can you play it with or without, or is it just analog?

AS: You can play it with or without, the control in this is fully configurable for every button, everything you can do, so there shouldn't be any problem. The controller design is very unique, and we didn't want it to be affected by some people holding it one way, and others holding another.

CG: On the PlayStation version, I recognize my buttons, and I start using shoulder buttons. I can consistently and smoothly go forward with the shoulder buttons, and this is the problem I was persisting for the Nintendo. The two shoulder buttons mean you probably need a third hand to do it right.

AB: It's a little bit tricky, but everybody kind of liked the d-pad configuration, the way it is set up, and with the d-pad configuration right now you can use either the digital pad or the analog pad, and they'll both do the same thing. It's just that with the analog pad you have finer control, but no shoulder buttons.

CG: Can you actually tell any distance, or is there any sort of video game equality death effects if you fall too far?

AS: If you're meaning in terms of like height restrictions inside the levels, no, there's no height restrictions.

CG: Which is the same as Doom... What about width restrictions?

AS: The levels are very vast, both in how they work and in the area that you are playing in... you have a great deal of play area.

CG: Do you think that the analog controller works well?

AS: Oh yeah, absolutely. I'm not quite sure why people make such a big deal about the analog controller; to me it was an easy extension of movement around. It just gives you a very fine, precise control.

CG: Everyone's jumping on the bandwagon now. Saturn has one, PlayStation is adding one...

AS: A lot of people were saying, "Well, can you aim the weapon with it?" and I like sure, we could have, but that's not Doom. Doom has auto aim, and that wasn't something we were allowed to mess with. And we would have left it the same if we had been able to...

CG: I know there was an awkward feel when we first got the controller, but that's the only way that I play it now.

CG: Is there going to be a memory card option or passwords?

AS: Yes, both for internal memory and the joy-cons versions.

CG: Doom 64 still set when it should, can we expect sequels?

AS: Sure, I would hope so. On the bulky drive, probably. That would be our next step.

CG: I was just wondering, have you seen Turok yet and what do you think of it?

AS: No, I've not seen it. I've seen screenshots, and I'm very curious to see what they're doing. I've heard mixed opinions about it, some things good, some things not as good, so I don't know what to believe.

CG: I've seen it running, and I've played it, and it's just awesome. The only problem is the meeting. But other than that, they've fixed up weapons. I've never seen weapons including Quake, that looked as good as Doom; they look like they're in FNAV, they're that good. You can hit someone, and you have different areas to attack. You can hit a vapor in the head and then sort of flip them side to side, spraying the screen with blood and then sort of collapse and twitch.

AS: That does sound good. Are there a lot of monsters that you have to fight at one time?

CG: Yes, but they allow the frame-rate down just a hair. This was an incomplete version though.

AS: Again, this is the speed size time trade-off. We would have done Doom 64 with polygonal monsters, but that would have been Quake. With our game, it's very smooth. It holds its frame rate, which to us was very important, and having a game slow down... we don't like that very much. One more thing, having the sprites allows us to have a lot more on the screen, a lot more action, tons of monsters and tons of projectiles.

CG: I'm covering both games for GameFan and Megafan, so it's not really a comparison, because I know what you guys set out to do and I know that it's an enhanced version of Doom, whereas Turok is something they have to start off all new.

SG: They're still drafting off of Doom. The thing is, we have so many things different that are happening with the monsters, I glad we went the route that we did...

CG: I'm not wishing to compare the two games...

SG: We're going to be compared, you can't help it, and to me they're two different games. I don't see a problem with them both co-existing, they're two different games, they're both first person perspective games, and they have two very different themes.

CG: In the past, Nintendo haven't liked violence. Do you think you're going to have to tone Doom 64 down for any sort of market?

AS: Actually, Nintendo is really good about that, especially as we now have the rating system. We'll certainly get a mature rating. Doom's been around, found it's home, it's had the blood, there's no way that they are going to take the blood out.

SG: It was really funny working on the Sony PlayStation last year. They said they had their own standard for video games. They said in writing that there should be no blood, no violence, except for games of high quality! [laughs]

AS: I think I'd have an agreement with Nintendo, they weren't going to put this on unless Doom remained as violent as before, so I don't think they are going to say anything about it.

CG: They're not looking down Turok. One of the programmers said, "If you shoot someone, it's realistic, but it's not gory," that's what should happen. Whereas Doom is sort of more fantasy so you can get away with more, do you think that's the case? Say, for example, when you hit someone with a rocket launcher, they don't have to explode in that much gore. Or do they?

AS: I have to watch my step here! [laughs] Yes, they do have to explode into that much gore, of course they have to. That, to me, is Doom. There's nothing wrong with gratuitous stuff, it's horribly funny, and it's a great deal of fun, and that's what we were after. We were after that element. That's what we thought was one of the best elements of Doom.

CG: What do you think of Quake?

AS: It's a very, very nice game, technically astounding. It's really a special piece of software.

CG: What would you expect the N64 version of Quake to look like?

AS: Well, we're working on it right now, but I can't tell you...

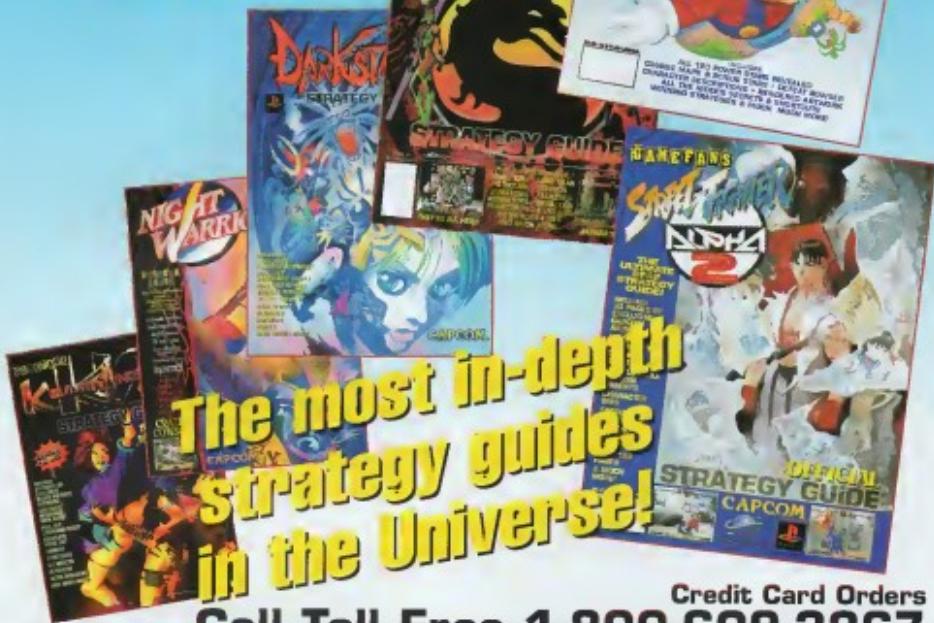
Iastic shared and lying face-down in a field. Obviously I had heard too much. But what I did hear (and read) made me for the first time of Doom that anyone has ever seen... Get ready to repel those Demonic hordes, people! Hell is opening up one last time!

TRANSMISSION ENDS

Craig Henderson and the rest of us GameFan would like to thank Aaron Soden, Sulay Gilman, and the entire Bethesda/Midway staff.



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THE FIRST NINTENDO 64
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ST. ANDREWS GOLF
AND THE FIRST HOOPS
GAME: NBA HANGTIME

PLUS:

TEN PIN ALLEY
NFL GAMEDAY '97
OPEN ICE
AND VR GOLF

SONY'S AMAZING



NFL GAMEDAY '97

GAMEFAN

SPORTS

VIEWPOINT

"STRAP"

With NBA HoopZone Midway finally puts the fun back in the game. Not only does this version exude silky smoothness, but the control with the analog stick is awesome. My favorite feature, though, is the selectable "create" mode. Bravo. Finally, the quality tunes wrap it all together... That voice, though... zzzzzzzzzz...

G	C	P	M	O	90
S	B	B	S	S	

Just like NBA Jam (in so many ways), Open Ice is appealing because it's done right. The graphics are nice, the game starts to reflect its theme with great mechanics, and lastly gameplay. For some, this doesn't sound like much of a game, but there's something extremely satisfying about playing open ice. Although listed by Disney in this category, PSX players should have no problem enjoying hours and hours of this. A solid 9-to-10 hockey action. Good crossover.

G	C	P	M	O	73
S	B	B	S	S	

The best golf game available on the Saturn is by far, Westwood's. It moves PGA Tour '97 is a game full of stability in its controls, graphics, and sound. It's a real 3D golf game, but the ball isn't as fast as the others. The ball rate isn't so fast, and the course-side strategy goes along with it. If you like to be a pro, then this is the game for you. It's got a lot of variety, from tournaments, mini-games, and great play. Westwood has done a great job with this one. Wise courses and good sound round out this winner.

G	C	P	M	O	78
S	B	B	S	S	

Will Madden be dethroned by Sony's grandiose football game? I don't think Madden '98 is the closest anyone has come to it. The graphics in just make lighter this game around. Thanks to a cool re-worked AI, Madden '98 puts a little more in the game. It's a great game. Other starting few releases include an awesome (although not GameStation) 3D engine, powerful new plays, and wonderful new features. Make this the game to buy if you're looking for a great football game. If you must buy a second best football game,

G	C	P	M	O	89
S	B	B	S	S	

Surprisingly, EA's soccer sports titles have been equal to or better than the PS versions. The stats in terms with AP, ST, and other stats are very accurate. The animation looks and the game rate is great. The play mechanics are hot; they're like the 10-to-10 games all over again. You can do some really cool things. One should never doubt the sports power of EA... they give you the license, the best options, and rock-solid gameplay, every year.

G	C	P	M	O	91
S	B	B	S	S	



NBA HoopZone
Midway 64
Midway



Open Ice
Playstation
Williams



Westwood's
PGA Tour '97
Westwood



Madden '98
PlayStation
EA



EA's Soccer Sports
EA

"JOE"

"Put up a brick" says the announcer at Pressie, referring this to the best version of NBA Jam I've played in or out of the arcades. *Jammin'*'s music (plus a bonus rap track at half time), great animation, smooth control, and more options than ever before make NBA HoopZone the quintessential "create" mode. Bravo. Finally, the quality tunes wrap it all together... That voice, though... zzzzzzzz...

G	C	P	M	O	89
S	B	B	S	S	

You know, I had a lot of fun playing this game. I got caught up with the wealth of sports games so much, sometimes I just wanted to play something else. I always wanted to play a more traditional sports, kind of hockey game to play. Makes you feel like you actually exert a certain level of skill and ability, rather than the variety of goals you score! Any game that makes you feel like a real sportsman is interesting. It is a real win-win.

G	C	P	M	O	85
S	B	B	S	S	

I was pleasantly surprised with NV Golf and find it is one of the best golf games I've played on a CD format. The play is smooth and the course has very nice contours in the fairways, not usually found in golf games. The most distinctive part of the game is the smooth control that you can select. There are various camera angles, as well as the ever-popular picture-in-picture screens. Overall, this game is simple and has a plus.

G	C	P	M	O	85
S	B	B	S	S	

The closed, Madden slow it, with smooth play and nice graphics, the timing is very realistic, and the AI play smart, as it should. It comes up a bit short of Madden, but the commentaries are more interesting. The thing is to that it's easier to play than Madden, which losing any of the realism, which was controlling. I had a great time playing this game.

G	C	P	M	O	92
S	B	B	S	S	

West, EA has put out the best hockey game on any platform to date. The control and stats are as close as second to none. EA sports did a great job trying to make this game as realistic as possible. The mechanics, the puck-hockey play is appeared, and game play is consistent-as-ice-hockey. I'm curious how it looks when they get a little tired, but I think it's still a great game. It's enough to throw it at anyone, but I'm sure that's pretty unlikely. EA is synonymous with the rest though.

G	C	P	M	O	92
S	B	B	S	S	



JOE KIDD



JACQUES STRAP

GameFan Sports Preview

1995-96 Season Start '97

Another great basketball season is on the horizon. I don't think any team will be able to compete with LA Live '97 or in the Zone 2, but I do like the Standout with their unique style. Another great option is the NBA Live '97 game. The standouts are great, but the graphics are not as good as the LA Live game. This is probably the best basketball game I've played in a long time. It's the first basketball game that I've played that I can actually enjoy playing. The ball isn't off the player's hands on the way up, rather than the traditional bounces. Lots of action, great stuff too. Lots of action, great stuff too. Lots of action, great stuff too. And it's overtimes. Big Teamz, this game has an excellent feature to work with.



KIDD'S CORNER



Well, the 1995-96 college basketball season is upon us, and we'll have to parallel the Duke of old with Laettner, Grant Hill and Horley, instead now we've got LaFrentz, Pierce and Jaques Vaughn, with a healthy supporting cast. Of course, we have the ultra-powerhouse over at Kentucky, but just like the UNLV squad of semi-pro athletes that went down in flames to Duke, so must Kentucky fall. Look to Kansas to take it all. The Hells have just lost 2 in a row, first time that's happened in years, and just dodged a 3rd. While the Gulls are having their problems, the Heat and Riley are on the rise in the East, while it looks as if Barkley's presence in Texas makes Houston the true runner in the early season West. But I don't know about Hakeem, maybe he should retire with his heart condition, although worst case scenario, if he had, he would die doing what he loved most... yes, several other athletes have literally died on the court from the same thing! Dennis Rodman just got fined over \$100,000 for using profanity and telling off the refs, think it'll stop him? ...Always quotable, Ted Turner, President/Owner of TNT and the Atlanta Braves recently said on religion, "God's not gonna send me to hell for sleeping with women and having a few drinks... I don't need to wear a cross to go to heaven!" In the NFL, the playoff picture has taken form, and believe it or not, there may be a changing of the guard. Atlanta still own the南, Tennessee, Denver and Cleveland are no longer the team to be reckoned with this year, but will be tested all the way to the Big Dance. Teams like Colorado and the New England Patriots will be absent, as they have been out of the playoffs since 1993. They have been harder to call this year than the Holyfield versus Mike Tyson. Yes! Holyfield VICTORY over Tyson! Was that not the single most Rocky-esque sports story of the year? Unbelievable, and fantastic for the sport in my opinion, although opinions have been mixed on that subject. The tenth sports game on the market right now is NBA Live '97. The response has been wild, and hoop fans in particular are grabbing it up big time, as EA's still pretty in their fourth spot at #1 on the charts. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to write to me c/o GameFan Magazine, or my e-mail address is: nreel@metropolismedia.com. Feel free to contact me at any time.



As promised, Strap's back with the *Open Ice* review. Little has changed between our last preview and the final, which means the game is still an extremely close translation of the arcade.

Having played the arcade *Open Ice* many, many times I can clearly see what made it to the PS intact. The rink seems to be a tad smaller than in the arcade, but the line-skating is smooth and exact. Otherwise, the player animation is good, and the sound, music, and voice are right on. Don't get me wrong, the arcade isn't terribly impressive, and any current next-gen system could probably handle it. All the NHL teams and top superstars are playable, and each are rated in several skill categories. Matter of fact, *Open Ice* is all about gameplay...

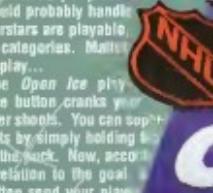
Three easy words describe *Open Ice* play mechanics: Jam on ice. One button cranks your turbo, one passes, and another shoots. You can simply power your passes and shots by simply holding turbo down before you nail the puck. Now, according to where you are in relation to the goal, a turbo-powered shot will often send your play into a special move before he releases. So you're flying through mid-rink, you split the defense to your teammate, he passes

it back, you slam down the turbo, and BOOM! A gravity defying back-flip slap-shot sails through the five-hole! Score the hat trick (three goals straight in this case) and your player's "On fire" with a maxed-out turbo-meter until the other team scores. Now you can rove around like a madman, torching the net with fireball wrist-shots and pummeling opponents with super-checks!

Open Ice may be incredibly simple in design, but you'd be surprised just how much brainless fun it can supply. And there's a wicked two-player mode, so get your buddies in on a few games. One final note: The only game that compares (quite favorably, I might add) to *Open Ice* is *Gretzky 3D Hockey*, reviewed by yours truly in issue 11. *N64* and PC owners should check it out.



HE'S ON FIRE!



MAJOR SCORE!



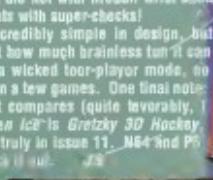
TURBO TIME!



CHALLENGE



OPEN ICE



OPEN ICE



GAMEFAN
STICKS
R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - MIDWAY

PUBLISHER - WILLIAMS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW



JACQUES STRAP
WHERE'S THE
BIG HEADS?



SUBSTITUTIONS



GAME OPTIONS



TRIVIA QUIZ



CREATE PLAYER



SUBSTITUTIONS - LOSERS
HIT THE BENCH!

SWITCHES! PLAY WIT'
EM. HOLMES!

TRIVIA QUIZ!
R YA SMART - OR
DUMB AS A ROCK?

CREATION MODE:
MAKE A
MONSTER!!

NBA HANGTIME

MIDWAY POLISHES UP THE
JAM ENGINE AND DELIVERS
SOME SERIOUS HANGTIME!



REVIEW



BESTSELLER - MIDWAY
PRODUCER - RICHARD
FRANCHISE CART
OF PLAYERS - 1-4
RELEASED - ALREADY
PRICE POINT - \$39.99



CHIP
HANGIN' WITH
THE JAM...



Make no mistake, *NBA Hangtime* is *NBA Jam*. However, while it looks (for the most part) and plays the same, it doesn't necessarily feel the same. Midway's won back the engine, tagged on a new name and done some heavy chipping, creating the first version since the original worthy of further investigation. The most notable change in my opinion is the ability to completely build the combatants. In the Create Player mode you're not only privy to a vast quiver of heads but you can alter weight, height, attributes, and uniforms as well. Aside from this instantly selectable texture, you get two additional reasons to hang with *Hangtime*. First, the analog control over the extremely well-animated characters is a joy and second, the music (especially the tell on rap tune at the half) is very cool. You'll miss the wicked chops of Tim Kitzow (the only man olive with true boom-shaka-laka) as the new guy just kind of drones along, but otherwise the audio's mighty fine. The graphics are highly animated even deep in to the crowd, parallax is abundant, and the frame rate's as smooth as Jordan's shiny head. The actual players are perfectly represented and four can play in what will ultimately go down in history as the best version of this game ever, courtesy of Williams and the Nintendo 64. It's not 3D all up in your face by any means, but if the ultimate *Jam* is what you seek, *Hangtime* delivers, big time.



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St. Andrew's GOLF



REVIEW



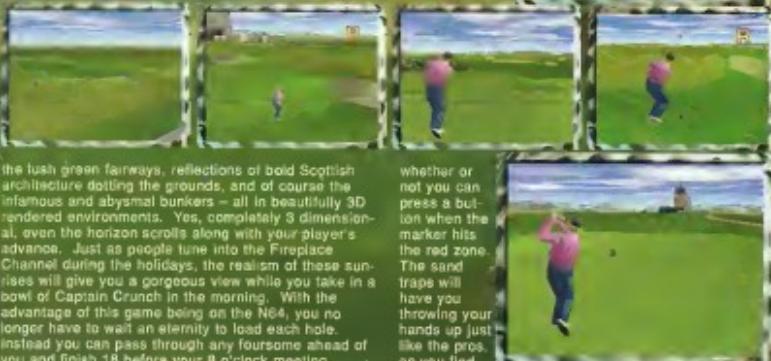
DEVELOPED BY: EA
PUBLISHED BY: EA
FORMAT: N64
PRICE: \$59.99
AVAILABLE: Now



JOE KIDD
A golf game you can appreciate.

Who in hell all over the world often seem like they're on a downward spiral. It's nice to know video golf games keep getting better and better. St. Andrew's Golf has become my newest, bestest security blanket. Just the other day, while playing a competitor's golf game, I remember thinking to myself, "Why can't they just make a golf game that's got some of those great 3D graphics that I see in non-sports games?" And just like that, a copy of St. Andrew's appeared on my desk – little did I know what lay before me. I slipped into total and complete, divot-slinging heaven. The rolling hills of legendary St. Andrew's stretched out before me past the lingering fog, the light morning drizzle,

PREPOSITION IS CRUCIAL, OR YOU MAY END UP IN THE DRIZZLE!



the lush green fairways, reflections of bold Scottish architecture dotting the grounds, and of course the infamous and abysmal bunkers – all in beautifully 3D rendered environments. Yes, completely 3 dimensional, over the horizon scrolls along with your player's advance. Just as people tune into the Fireplace Channel during the holidays, the realism of these sunrises will give you a gorgeous view while you take in a bowl of Captain Crunch in the morning. With the advantage of this game being on the N64, you no longer have to wait an eternity to load each hole. Instead you can pass through any foursome ahead of you and finish 18 before your 8 o'clock meeting.

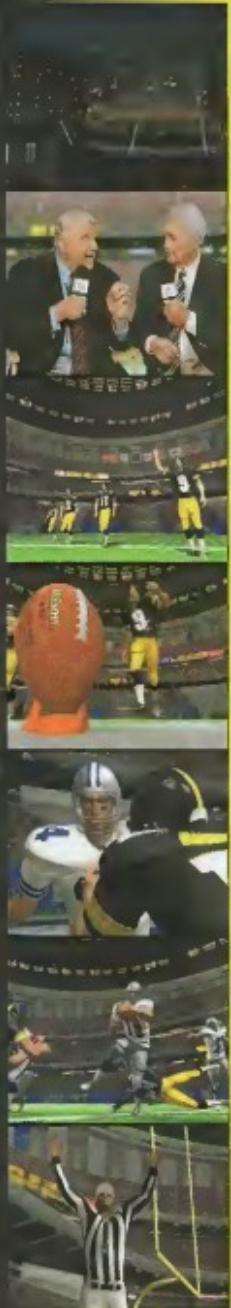
Another pleasant surprise exclusive to N64, is a golf swing totally controlled by an analog pad. No more of the ultra-precision, swing-o-meter, where pressing the 'X' button is as easy as 1-2-3. Instead, you bring it back right to the power level at which you desire, with as much control as you have in the real thing, along with a pace that will comfort you. Golf is a game of rhythm, and finesse, not

whether or not you can press a button when the marker hits the red zone. The sand traps will have you throwing your hands up just like the pros, as you find yourself flush against a wall taller than yourself; a virtual impossibility, in trying to get the trajectory of your shot to go 90 degrees. This is a treacherous predicament as you can go into the hole 3 under and upon completion of the hole, find yourself 3 strokes over!

Aside from slightly irritating musical accompaniment, the game is a winner for golf enthusiasts, and gives you a little taste of Scotland at the same time. JK

"THE INFAMOUS AND ABYSMAL BUNKERS WILL HAVE YOU THROWING YOUR HANDS UP JUST LIKE THE PROS, AS YOU FIND YOURSELF FLUSH AGAINST A WALL TALLER THAN YOURSELF; A VIRTUAL IMPOSSIBILITY, IN TRYING TO GET THE TRAJECTORY OF YOUR SHOT TO GO 90 DEGREES."





Ever since the beginning of Madden in 16-

bit format, EA has been at the top of the charts. Now, not only is Madden available on all platforms including PC, but the same "Brute-Force" AI is intact and consistent across the board; an EA priority and a precedent in sports games. They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, as football games spring up everywhere, trying to emulate and bask in the success of Madden, but in the end, they all bow to their predecessor.

Madden has become somewhat of a "social gathering" whether it be with professional athletes on the road, frat house parties, or simply an after-school activity. The Madden craze will be upon us bigger and badder than ever before, so now is the time to bone up. On the following pages, you will find a list of EA's personally ranked, highest rated plays and strategy tips to give you a balanced attack of power running, efficient air attack, glove-like defense, and cutthroat special teams. In a day and age where a game of Madden is synonymous with, "Let's take this one outside!", you've now equipped yourself with the best training guide available to take out the opponent. Have fun and happy sacking.

The Running Game

Your running game will determine the success of your offense. Rushing sets the tempo of your attack by wearing down the defense and opening up the air zone. The following tips will help you keep the ball on the ground successfully, no matter who you have in the backfield.

1. **Follow your Blocks.** In Madden '97 the key to running the ball is reading your blocks. Just like the NFL, Emmitt Smith is not the fastest, nor the strongest, but he is arguably the best at "finding the holes" that his enormous linemen create. If you follow your blockers, and let the play develop, your patience will reward you with openings toward the goal line. Breaking tackles is possible depending on your back, but never a sure thing, therefore insure yourself by keeping one of your men between you and the defender.

2. **Accept a Loss.** If your worthy opponent has guessed right and it's evident you will be caught for a loss, the best alternative for you is to "accept the loss" and resist the temptation to run backwards. Inevitably you will only lose more yardage.
3. **Speed Bursts.** When using the speed burst, you want to save it for precisely the right moment. Hit the speed burst just as you make your move through the hole and break up-field.
In a situation where the defense is coming down strong on you, try using your speed burst just as you cut back against the grain and catch the D off guard; resulting in defensive over-pursuit, and extra yardage for you.
4. **Mix up your Running Plays.** By selecting a variety of run plays (i.e. sweeps to the outside), you'll spread out the defense, open up the inside running game, keep them honest and most importantly, build a foundation for your passing game.

5. **Time Management.** When the game is in hand, run the ball. This is why it is key to have a good running game. Let the play clock run down as far as you can and then begin your play. (More on Time Management later)



STRATEGY

PLAYSTATION, SATURN, SNES, GENESIS, PC

DEVELOPER - EA
PUBLISHER - EA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-8
GENRE - FOOTBALL
RATING - M



JOE KIDD
Don't forget
you mouth-
guard!

The Passing Game

Efficiency is the name of the game. You must really learn how to find your rhythm and read the defensive coverage quickly as the quarterback; if you don't, you'll either end up on your back, or find yourself recording more INT's than touchdowns. Learn from the following how to get the most out of your passing attack.

- Timing is Everything. In order to be successful in executing pass plays, you need

To wait for the play to develop and patterns to take form before getting rid of the ball.



- Throwing Under the Zone. Throwing under the zone is key in many of the pass plays. Find the plays that achieve this (quick pants and / assets), and make long yardage out of short passes.



- Positioning. In some of the shorter routes, it is essential to have your receiver get in front of the defensive back to make the reception. Skilled Receivers. Receivers with above-average talent have exceptional ability to fight the defender for position and catch the ball.



- Multitude of Receivers. By selecting 4 or 5 receiver sets, this forces the opponent's hand into at least one of the receivers having single coverage. Of course, the more players you have going down field, the less you have to protect the QB, so know where your receivers are going to be.



- Use your Backs. If you can't find a receiver open, instead of forcing the pass, look for one of your backs in the flats as a safety valve.

BEST OFFENSIVE PLAYS!

The following are the most effective plays for gaining: short, medium or long yardage.

SHORT YARDAGE (1-3 YDS.)

I Form, 2TE, Power Strong

Lots of power blocking - use this speed burst as you hit the hole.



I Formation, 2TE, HB Wham

Get the fullback going in front of you to pound out the much-needed short gains.



Near, Normal, HB Delay

It allows the DL to penetrate when the running back sneaks past them with the ball.



Single Back, TE Motion, HB Dive Right

This key for both plays is to use the TE man in motion as an extra blocker. Put him in motion and stop the ball when he gets about where the hole your running back will go through is.



Pro Form, Normal, Quick Post

Let the CB break, short drop and then let it to the middle receiver. This is good for a couple yards, unless you let it go long and let the DB get a jump on the ball.



Pro Form, Normal, All Streaks

This is a good play if you catch your opponent sleeping in a run defense.



MEDIUM YARDAGE (4-8 YDS.)

Shotgun, Normal, Quick Hitch

Throw as receiver turns back and offensive player is behind the receiver.



Shotgun, Normal, Quick Slant

With a good receiver you can even break this to a much larger play.



Pro Form, Normal, Weak Flood

Send everyone down, then hit the back out of the backfield.



Pro Form, 3WR, Comeback

Throw to the WR on the right doing the comeback.



I Form, Normal, Out and Up

If you can hold the ball long enough, throw to the WR on the left.



I Form, Normal, TE Endz

Bring the blocker in motion and when he gets over the other side of me just throw it to him, quick! This play keeps the defense off guard.



Near, 2TE, HB Inside

This is a good play when the defense is set up to defend the pass.



Near, Normal, FB Circle

Hike the ball and immediately throw it to the TE on the seam. Watch him split the safeties and run for a nice gain.



Far, 3WR, Weak Flood

Pass to either back coming out of the backfield. This is effective when defense is sagging.



LONG YARDAGE (9+ YDS.)

I-Form, 3WR, Square In

Sub in your best WR in the Slot on the Right and throw the ball deep to him.



I-Form, Normal, QB Slant

Depending on the defense, this can be really effective for the long gain. Receiver is free to depends on linebacker coverage.



I-Form, 3WR, Post Corner

Depending on the defense, you can throw over or under the coverage.



Single Back, Normal, Flicker

Mixes up the coverage and then throw deep.



Pro Form, Normal, Quick Post

Hit the tight end quickly against a zone defense.



Single Back WR Breakout

Hit the receiver on the deep out.



DEFENSE

No matter how lethal your offense is, if you can't stop the opposition from moving the ball on you, you won't have very much success. Most of you already know the fundamentals; now it's time to get aggressive and get the defensive edge.

Outside QB Pressure

Take the outside approach to the QB. It is tough to get to the QB running straight up the middle and at him. By taking an outside approach to the QB, you create a one-on-one situation where you have one man to beat. If you can get close enough you can either sack him or force him to run up the middle where the rest of the D-line should be waiting for him.



Another strategy is to focus on stopping the pass. If you are a good run stuffer, you can call a zone defense and use the Free Safety to play in the secondary. If you like to gamble, jump in a blitz defense and play man-to-man once the ball is in the air.

Unfortunate QB Errors

If the pass rush breaks down, the QB will have time to find the open receiver. The key to defending a pass is beating the receiver to the ball. As soon as the ball is in the air switch to the closest defender and then get him in position to deflect or intercept the pass. Now you must react to where the ball is about to land. On a quick slant, it may be too late to defend the pass, but an effective strategy is to make a calculated dive at the time of the pass and try to knock the ball out. At least you will be able to make an immediate tackle. For short yardage, drop a defensive linemen into coverage, especially against a back coming out of the backfield or the tight end.



Tackling: Technique vs. Power Hits

Only use the power tackles if you have help behind you. It is a very risky move and should only be used at close range and for must-stops like short yardage. Dives are also risky but effective. If you are behind a ball carrier and he is about to score then it is obviously worth the risk. Otherwise, dive when you have the support of linebacker and defensive backs there to help out if you miss. Contain, Contain, Contain!!! In long yardage situations play it safe and let the computer controlled players make the tackles. You play clean up. Just make sure he does not get by you and pick up the first down.



BEST DEFENSIVE PLAYS!

The following are the most effective plays for defending against: short, medium or long yardage.

SHORT YARDAGE (1-3 YDS.)



Goaline, Blaze

If you know they are going to run, this one is killer. If they pass, you're in trouble.



Goaline, Man Left 2

Puts everyone after the backs but leaves two back for short pass coverage.



Goaline, Left/Right

If he is going to run and you want to guess which side, guess correctly and you will stop it.



Goaline, Middle

This puts all the big boys on the line side by side and lets them overwhelm the offensive line, an excellent short yardage run stopper.



3-4, 52 Wildcat

This defense spreads out the D-linemen and outside backers across the line and makes it tough for the offense to run anything to the outside.



4-3 Double, Blitz
Blitzing linebackers give extra defense against short yardage.

MEDIUM YARDAGE (4-6 YDS.)



4-3, Tuf Bronco

This is a solid defense against the run, but at the same time, it puts pressure on the QB. Use the middle linebacker in coverage on the TE or blitz up the middle.



4-3, Man Right/Left

Call the one that gives man coverage to the wider side of the field.



3-4, 53 Out
Good defense to stop the short/mid wide plays.



4-6, 46 Cover or Monster

This puts a lot of pressure on the QB from all angles. But if you don't get to the QB quick, he might burn you for a deep one.



4-3, Cheat Left/Right

Same as goaline left/right but LBs stay out for pass coverage.



4-3, Zone Double
Double coverage on main receiver with zone coverage and decent pass rush.

LONG YARDAGE (8+ YDS.)



Nickel Crashman

Great pass defense, especially if you have good personnel.



Nickel Double Out

Doubles up the receivers and gets good middle field coverage.



Nickel Double Gold

Same as ND Out but puts more pressure on the QB.



Dime 3Deep

One of the better prevents, if you are going to use one.



Dime Prevent One

Prevents giving up the big play and still allows for decent coverage.



4-3 RCB Blitz

This can be risky and can leave your opponent open for a big gain. Sneak the right corner, back up to the line and then charge in for the QB.

SPECIAL TEAMS AND GENERAL TIPS

1. Onside Kicks: Execution and Defense.

To execute you want to tap it as fast as possible or wait until the power drops back down to zero. You also want to move the directional bar halfway to one side or the other. There is no advantage to kicking it straight ahead. To defend you want to take the nearest player to the ball once the ball is kicked and start steering that player to where the ball is going to land. Once you have the ball, run away (down screen) from the oncoming players so you can avoid a big hit once you get the ball.



2. Kickoff and Punts.

Coverage:

Take the fastest guy and try and contain ball carrier. Let the computer controlled players make the tackles and don't go for the dive. Stay in front of the return man and make sure he does not get by you. A lot of players like to go for the big hit, but a miss usually gives up big return yards.

Returns:

Wait for wedge to form defense to commit, and then run it outside. Get what you can, and do not run backwards.



3. Audibles: When to Call Them.

You have to learn to read the defenses. Best case scenarios are short yardage. Many teams will go into a strictly run defense formation like goaline. If you can, audible to a pass play. If the defense comes to the line in a Dime, audible to a run and get some easy running yards. You want to be able read stuff like where the Safeties are, where's the double coverage, and are they about to blitz. On offense it is a good idea to set all of your audibles to the same formation so you don't give away your play. On defense it is good to have a short yardage run, a standard run, and a standard pass defense so you can match the offense formation.

4. Time management.

No reason to give your opponent any extra time with the ball. If the clock is against you, you want to force the other team to pass. If they run, and there is less than three minutes remaining, you may want to start using your time-outs. If you can, chase them out of bounds. Smart players will keep the ball in bounds. Lastly, use the two-minute warning to your advantage. Be aware of when it is and how many plays you can get off or prevent happening in that time span.

EA's Top-Rated Madden Running Teams/Backs:

1. DALLAS (Emmitt Smith)
2. Detroit (Barry Sanders)
3. Philadelphia (Ricky Watters)
4. Indianapolis (Marshall Faulk)
5. Pittsburgh (Jerome Bettis)



EA's Top-Rated Madden Passing Teams/Players:

1. SAN FRANCISCO (Young, Rice, Jones)
2. Dallas (Aikman, Irvin, Sanders, Novacek)
3. Green Bay (Favre, Brooks, Chmura)
4. New England (Bledsoe, Coates)



EA's Top-Rated Madden Offenses:

1. DALLAS
2. Oakland
3. Philadelphia
4. Detroit

MADDEN Genesis Codes:

1. "Disco" (All 70's)
2. "Happy Days" (All 50's)
3. "New Wave" (All 80's)
4. "Boom" (All Time Madden)
5. "It's kindgame" (EA Sports Team)
6. "Overpaid" (Bypasses Salary Cap Restrictions)

If you create players with these names, you'll get these 6 teams!

EA's Top-Rated Madden Defenses:

1. DALLAS
2. Pittsburgh
3. San Francisco
4. Denver

Run Defense:

1. DALLAS
2. Pittsburgh
3. San Francisco
4. Denver
5. Buffalo

Pass Defense:

1. PHILADELPHIA
2. Dallas
3. San Francisco

*All ratings based on 1996 NFL statistics

CONGO BOWL



HOMEFRONT SPORTS



REVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ARKANE

PUBLISHER - ABC

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-6

DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM

AVAILABLE - NOW

SHIDOSHI
Hey... where's the
snack bar?

When you think sports games, bowling probably isn't the first thing that comes to your mind. But *Ten Pin Alley* is so good that the sport has finally been done justice. Most bowling games before *TPA* were rather simple, both in play mechanics and in replication of the real life sport. That's not the case here: getting a good score requires practice and skill, not just knowing where to throw to get a strike every time. You control aspects like aim, spin, power, and release point, resulting in a control system that is easy to grasp but difficult to master. The lane is equally realistic in a number of ways. *TPA* accounts for lane oil, which effects the travel of the ball, and as you play the oil wears away slowly. The biggest factor which impressed me were the pins. EACH pin has about 5,000 contact points, so that when one pin hits another, the direction and way they travel is as realistic as possible. The first time I watched *TPA* in action, I was honestly amazed. And, of course, what would bowling be without modes like team play and tournament mode, where you and five other friends can go against one another, join together

on teams, or

LOOK, I'M IN
THE GAME!

distinct personalities. Humorous real-time cut-scenes are provided in instances like missing a good shot or getting a strike. Once you've found your character of choice, you can take them into an editor where you can change things like their name, hair or outfit color, ball weight or type, and skill level.

Save your favorite combination, and their lifetime scores as well as you play over time.

Ten Pin Alley is my choice for sleeper hit of the year. If you like bowling, you'll be in heaven, but if you don't, look past that. It's a fun, addicting game, and that's what matters most. S



BABY'S GOT BACK

PERFECT YOUR FORM,
PERFECT YOUR SCORE!



NFL GameDay '97

Here we go! Finally, some real competition for *Madden '97*. Yes, Sony scores big with *NFL GameDay '97*, their latest and greatest football sim for the PS. This hot game is available now, and nothin' should stop you from checking it out. Unless, of course, you'd like to read on and find out why...

Remember the amazing 3D engine driving *NCAA GameBreaker*? It's also been implemented in *GameDay '97*, and boy, does it move well. The sprite-based players are well-animated, and the game runs at a blazing 30 fps within giant, smooth, well-textured polygonal stadiums. Even when playing on the highest speed setting, the game blasts between plays, formations, options, and views, quickly and on the fly. The sound, too, has



received a quality face-lift. In other words, *NFL GameDay '97* is a massive improvement over the first *GameDay*.

In the realm of gameplay, the computer AI has been beefed up, so certain wide-out passing plays

(guaranteed plays in the first *GameDay*) are now completely covered. The controls, though, are extremely second nature and responsive, so expect pinpoint accuracy during runs and/or defensive plays. Employing all the many plays and con-

trols ain't as difficult as it used to be, thanks to the perfectly tweaked play mechanics. The game menus and formations are also easy to work with, and, ultimately, just as easy to use.

NFL GameDay '97 has been available for a while now, but with the Super Bowl looming so closely, I felt it necessary to take a detailed look at it. After all, it's hot stuff. So if you're sick of *Madden '97* (how...?), or if you're simply looking for one of the year's best football games, *GameDay '97* is here. JS

REVIEW



PlayStation

RATING - SATURDAY

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-E

DIFFICULTY - INCREASING

PRICE - \$49.99



JACQUES STRAP
HARD-HITTIN'
GRIDIRON FUN!!



REVIEW



Get on top of your game.



GAMER'S GUIDE

REVIEW



DEVELOPED - NINJA

PUBLISHED - IN SPORTS

FORMAT - CD

NUMBER OF PLAYERS - 1-4

BUDGET - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD

Mousoumou-nan,
Mousoumou-nan,
Neenan, Neenan,
NOONAN!



15 DIFFERENT CAMERA ANGLES

There's nothing like getting off work, going to the driving range and smacking a bucket of balls. No better way to let off some steam, and show that little white ball who's boss. Or tee-off times at 7:30 AM, hitting dew-covered divots high into the air. But who really likes getting up at 6:30 AM, when you could have gotten up at 8AM, and why spend the \$8 on a bucket of balls each day, when you can simply plug in VR Golf '97? Choose from practice mode, strokeplay or matchplay - Skins, tourname, Foursome, ARA Tour, or Pro Tour. VR uses the latest technology in Virtual FieldVision which gives you access to nearly any perspective imaginable. I counted 15 different camera angles! The most

unique angles were the ones with the "Info"

option, which shows the ball flying right at the screen and then conversely, the angle tips as you see the ball flying away from you the moment it reaches its crescendo. You'll definitely want to take advantage of the various split-level screens that give you green close-ups, fairway lies, ball trajectory, and swingform. No longer are you just limited to just one camera shot, but now you have up to 3 at a time!

One of the things that really impressed me about their use of 3D was the contours

in the course.

Most of the golf games I've played are totally flat, except for the

greens that have that 3D web-effect.

The hills on the fairway make this game much

closer to the real thing - we are of course, supposed to be playing a championship-style course, not the local mini. VR Golf has overall smooth gameplay, short load-times and is very user friendly. Not much crowd-in this one however, which diminishes the tournament atmosphere, and instead creates a more personal game. You can create your own golfers, which is good, because you won't find actual PGA players, so you'll have to create your own. The tournament does give you a pool of 20 computer players to compete against as well as 4 human players in the AMA, and a pool of 48 competing in 4 rounds of the Pro Tour. VR Golf definitely gets the nod, especially in their unique gameplay options, and all of the different ways they've created to view it. JK



WORK ON THE SHORT GAME...

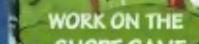
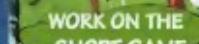
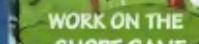
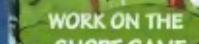
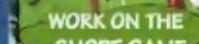
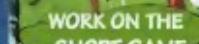
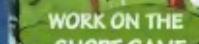
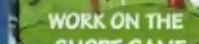
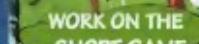
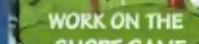
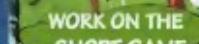
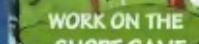
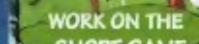
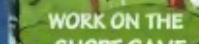
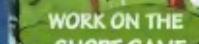
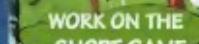
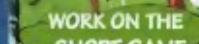
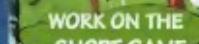
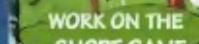
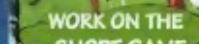
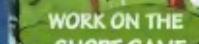
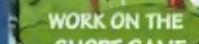
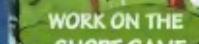
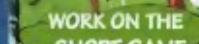
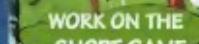
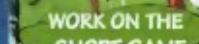
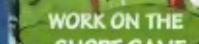
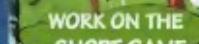
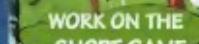
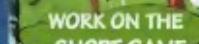
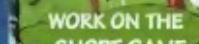
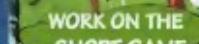
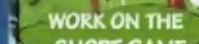
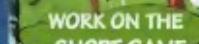
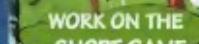
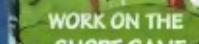
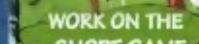
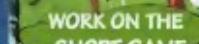
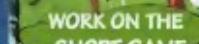
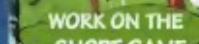
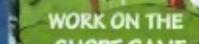
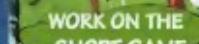
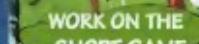
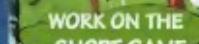
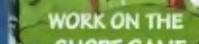
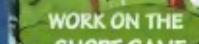
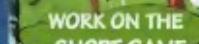
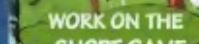
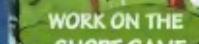
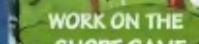
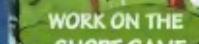
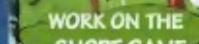
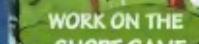
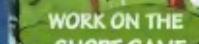
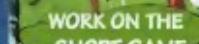
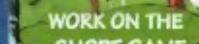
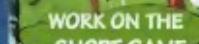
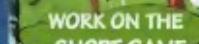
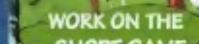
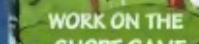
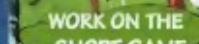
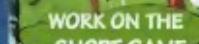
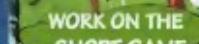
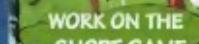
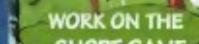
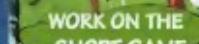
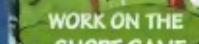
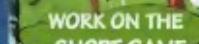
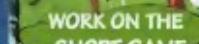
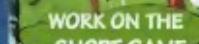
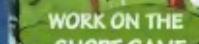
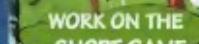
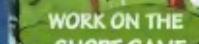
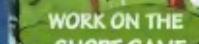
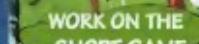
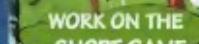
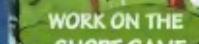
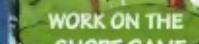
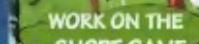
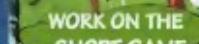
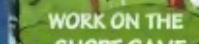
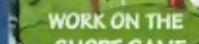
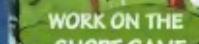
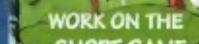
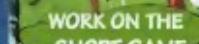
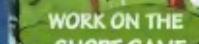
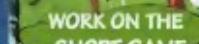
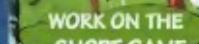
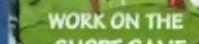
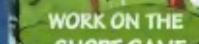
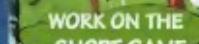
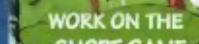
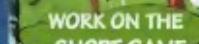
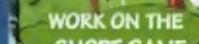
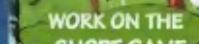
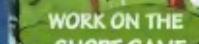
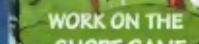
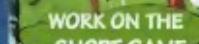
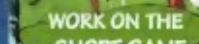
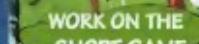
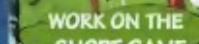
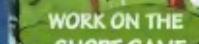
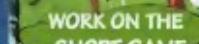
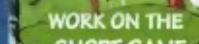
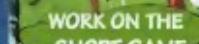
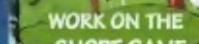
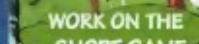
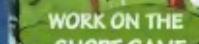
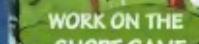
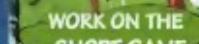
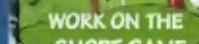
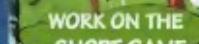
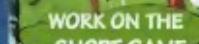
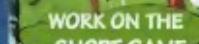
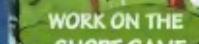
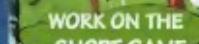
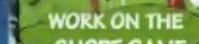
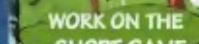
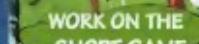
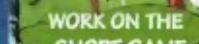
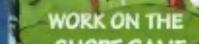
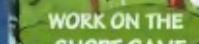
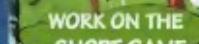
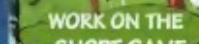
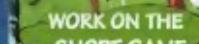
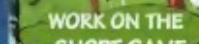
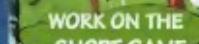
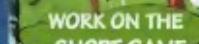
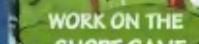
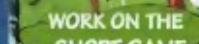
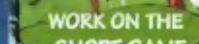
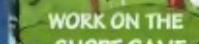
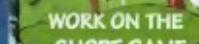
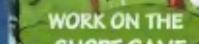
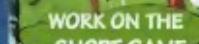
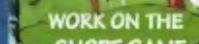
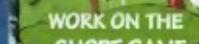
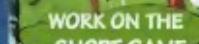
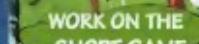
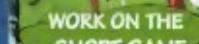
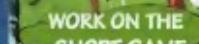
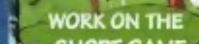
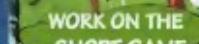
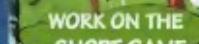
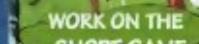
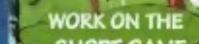
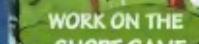
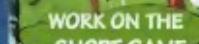
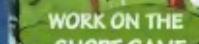
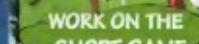
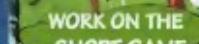
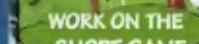
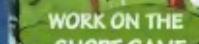
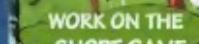
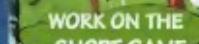
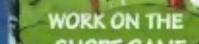
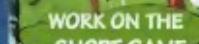
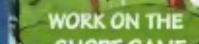
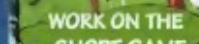
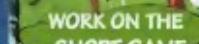
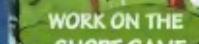
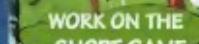
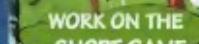
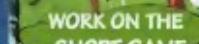
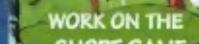
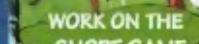
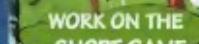
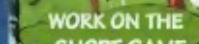
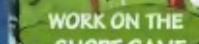
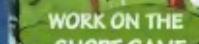
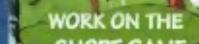
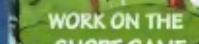
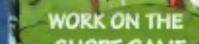
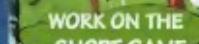
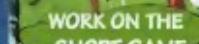
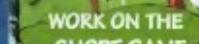
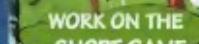
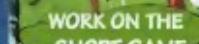
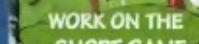
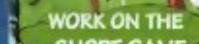
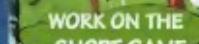
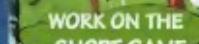
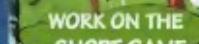
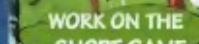
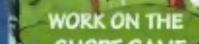
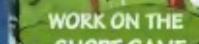
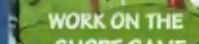
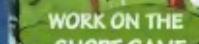
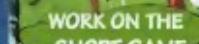
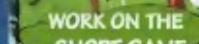
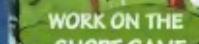
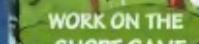
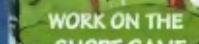
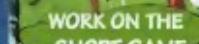
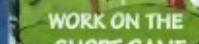
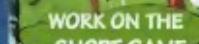
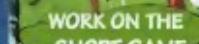
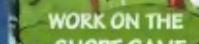
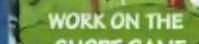
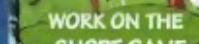
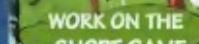
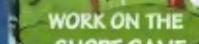
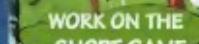
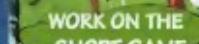
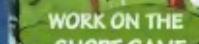
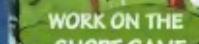
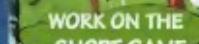
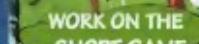
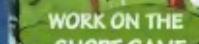
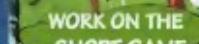
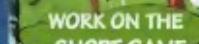
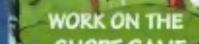
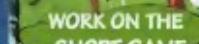
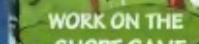
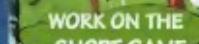
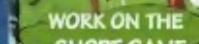
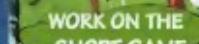
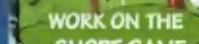
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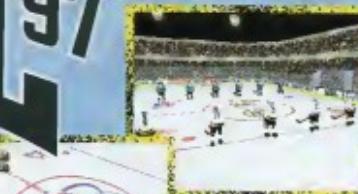




NHL 97



SHOOTOUT: Take it to the ice. Exciting one on one action to decide the game's outcome by breakaway shots on goal.



REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER: EA

PUBLISHER: EA

FORMAT: CD

PLAYERS: 1-8

DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE

PRICE: \$49.99



JOE KIDD
Let's take it to the ice.

Just when you thought things were slowing down, EA blindsides us with *NHL 97*. Now, one of the fastest growing sports has a game on the Saturn to complement it. The opening music will have you pumped up for some hardcore checking, with the synthesizer jamming in the background.

You can choose between Exhibition, Season or Playoff mode, or you can opt for the wild Shootout. While Season allows you to track 8 seasons simultaneously, Shootout mode was particularly fun, because I didn't have to end in a tie to participate in the ultimate mano y mano competition. Speaking of 8, imagine getting 7 of your friends and plugging in for a real life rumble on ice... you can do it! The stadiums and rinks are authentic and emblazoned with home team logos. The players are 3-D polygon players animated from the movements of actual NHL'ers, but honestly, I wasn't thrilled with the player graphics. The graphics weren't bad, but spoiled sports gamers like

myself have huge expectations these days; the detail in the goalie masks, however, are second to none.

Of course, with EA, everything in the real sport is included in the game: over 600 NHL players, licenses for the 26 rendered goalie masks, updated rosters, statistical accuracy, and individual player ratings. In addition, they even go so far as to bring in Fox TV's John Davidson as Hockey Night host to set the tempo for the game. Options include create and trade players, signature moves and fights, multiple player injuries and more. The overall play is smooth, but I had occasional difficulties with "Ice Compensation" control, resulting in "skate-by."

They enhanced the play by allowing us to appreciate the game from every perspective, as '97 includes 9 different camera angles, and 11 on replays. The realism is unsurpassed as you take on the player's perspective; seeing only what he sees, EA's really developed the AI in the game, as scoring, executing strategy and defensive stands are all very logical. The true hockey fanatic will certainly appreciate JK



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NINTENDO 64

Shoshinkai Report

JAPAN NOW

FEATURES

While Nintendo's future is still uncertain in Japan, the system's been a runaway success in the States, and ended up being one of the most sought-after items this holiday season (Unfortunately, it was still beaten out in the media by "Tickle Me Elmo," proving that we've still got a long way to go as a species). What's in the future for those who found an N64 under their tree? The '96 Shoshinkai, in Makuhari Japan, held the answer: The N64's still lagging in quantity, but leading in quality.

Nintendo had only three playable games on the show floor, and you can find those (Mario Kart, StarFox, Blast Corps) elsewhere in this issue. The show's most tantalizing unveilings (The 64DD, Zelda 64, Yoshi's Island 64, Mother 3, and Yuke Yuke! Troublemakers), however, are all right here...

By Takuhi & The Enquirer

Golden Eye 007

Nintendo still has Rare hard at work on this slightly overdue movie conversion. As you can see, the game has evolved tremendously since we showed the first shots a year ago. Still waiting to see those driving scenes...



Vibration Pack

Nintendo showed a new peripheral known in Japan as the "Vibration Pack" (they're still working on the US name). It plugs into the back of your N64 controller, and when you get hit in certain games (Blast Corps and StarFox are the first two), it shakes your controller, giving you a quick blast of feedback. It costs about 12 bucks, requires 2 AA batteries, and will be released at the same time as StarFox 64.

effects, the colorful pre-rendered graphics are incredible (and still manage to capture the cartoonish feel of the first). The play mechanics look to be basically unchanged, except that it appears that Yoshi has finally lost baby Mario. Certainly won't miss his whining.



Yoshi's Island 64

Finally: The Nintendo 64's first side-scrolling adventure. While there isn't much parallel at this stage, or any Clockwork Knight 20/30

Time Crisis Update

Namco has announced the details on their GunCon controller, and that the PlayStation version of Time Crisis will feature a special stage exclusive to the home system.

Namco's "GunCon" plugs into both your PlayStation AND your TV, ensuring ten times the accuracy of Konami's light gun. It will be compatible only with Time Crisis, and it is the only gun you can use for Time Crisis. Accordingly, Time Crisis and the gun will only be sold as a set. The American version is bright yellow.

The new stage takes place in a hotel run by a new villain,

Kantaris (pictured here), who's also secretly developing biological weapons. The new stage has two different routes... In one you take an elevator up to a party at the top floor, and in the other, you take the stairs to an indoor hotel shopping mall. Thanks to Time Crisis' newly added "ERC System," the game automatically changes the player's route depending on their skill... The player will not have a choice. The new stage definitely features new textures, enemies, bosses, and midbosses. Time Crisis ships in Japan this March.

Gumpel Yokoi Forms Own Company

Gumpel Yokoi, who left Nintendo earlier this year, has started his own company, "Koto." Rumors that his abrupt exit was due to the colossal failure of Nintendo's Virtual Boy system may be untrue, and Mr. Yokoi has suggested the possibility that future Koto projects may be released by his former employer.

"When Nintendo became a big company, we were only able to make major projects," Gumpel said. "But I had lots of other ideas. I started Koto with the hope of making products out of the ideas

I've been accumulating for the last 30 years."

Koto has a staff of only 6 people, and will be designing products, not releasing them. For the purpose, Koto also has a sister company called "Sergo." Koto currently has 6 products in development, the first of which could go into production in June of next year, according to the Japanese video game publication, Dengeki Otaku.

What are these mystery projects? No one's saying, although Mr. Yokoi has announced flat out that they're "not N64, Saturn, or PlayStation games." But it does seem as if Koto's process will remain in the video game industry, and one, judging by a vague description of "high level technology" that was developed at the time for expensive, high level military use, that can now be used for only 100 yen [around \$1], seems to be a description of a new piece of arcade hardware. Other sources indicate that he is also developing small, electronic children's toys for mass production.

Mr. Yokoi, possibly the most famous engineer in the industry, has a great deal of confidence in the product that Koto plan to announce next year. "If it succeeds," he suggested, with a modest laugh "I could be the next Bill Gates... maybe."

NEWS



Legend of Zelda 64



It's *Zelda!* *Zelda!* *Zelda!* While this fifth chapter in the series that defined the term action/RPG existed only as approximately 3 seconds of video tape, it looks to be well worth the wait. Long gone is the stumpy, Pinocchio-nosed Link render from hell Nintendo showed last year. Now we have an incredibly cool main character, complete with facial expressions, in a beautiful 3D environment. All of the shots that Nintendo showed are from dungeons, and they don't seem to show any of the action angles from the demo itself, but if the game can even come close to approaching this quality, the 64DD players are going to fly off the shelves. More shots next page!



Kirby's Air Ride

Kirby's wasn't playable at this year's *ShoChikuBai*. Odd considering it was last year... This 4-player racing game should be the next major Nintendo release after *Blast Corps* and *StarFox 64*.



Jungle Emperor

Nintendo's sole surprise announcement at the show was that *Jungle Emperor* (Known in America as "Kumba the White Lion"), late, ultra-famous manga artist Osamu Tezuka's most well-regarded masterpiece, will be converted into a Nintendo 64 game. While the artwork, music, and scenario will be handled by Osamu Tezuka Productions, Nintendo will be handling the programming and game design, under the watchful eye of General Producer Shigeru Miyamoto. Although it will definitely be 3D, the exact genre of the game is still unclear. A representative of Osamu Tezuka Productions stated that unlike action games, in which you only use your reflexes or RPGs in which you only use your head, Kumba will be a new type of game in which you also "use your heart." The game will be a massive 128-meg cartridge, and is due out in early 1998.

© Osamu Tezuka Productions



VIII, Last Bronx on Saturn

Sega has announced that they have begun the conversions of popular arcade titles *Virtua Fighter* and *Last Bronx* for the Saturn. One very early shot has been shown of *Last Bronx*, AM3's 3D, weapon-based fighter, but details on *Virtua Fighter* are, such as confirmation on whether or not the home version will feature an upgrade chip, have yet to be announced. No release date has been set for either title.

BioHazard Movie Planned

On December 3rd, German film production company Constantine Films announced that they had acquired the license to make a general release, feature film out of Capcom's *BioHazard* (Resident Evil) series.

Although storyline and casting details have not been

announced, we do know that the film will be live action, with CG monsters from the game. The film's budget is a relatively high (I mean, by European standards), 20 million dollars. Constantine Films is hoping to have the movie in general release, worldwide, by the end of next year.

Excited? Here's one more ticket for you: This is Constantine's second film, and the first was... The live-action *Street Fighter* movie! Right. Never mind.

Quick FFVII Update

Square has announced the tenth playable *Final Fantasy VII* character (possibly the last...?), a knight by the name of Sephiroth. You can't tell from these pics, but the dramatic character wields a sword nearly twice his body length (and I mean height, not width).

A native of Nibelheim, the town that Cloud and Tifa called home, Sephiroth left to become a soldier in Shinra's growing army. He soon gained fame as Shinra's strongest warrior, and a young Cloud looked up to him with awe. It was out of respect to him, Cloud's personal hero, that Cloud first left

While at the show, we were fortunate enough to get a chance to speak with Ferlin Kaplan, head of Nintendo PR Department, and Jim Herick, who acts as the development manager of the Tree House, while fulfilling other duties of Nintendo as well, about the future of the Nintendo 64.

Gf: Let's start with some of the big questions that have been on the minds of gamers recently. When will *Zelda 64* first be shown to the public, and when will the finished product be released?

JH: I can't tell you that. What exactly will be shown at the E3 will be determined, like it is for this show, at the last possible minute. We want to give every game every opportunity to find. Last year for E3 we were actually burning new images on the floor of the show!

Gf: Killer Instinct Gold?

JH: Exactly. It's too early for us to say what's going to be at E3, but it's pretty logical to assume that you're going to see interactive playable exhibits of the 64DD.

Gf: I know this is a touchy subject, but what price point are you trying to reach with the 64DD? I've heard rumors of \$99.

JH: It hasn't been determined yet. Manufacturing hasn't really ramped up yet, so we don't know the cost of goods. We also don't know if it's going to be packed in with anything. It seems to me that there needs to be a compelling title to make the 64DD a must-have accessory.

Gf: Is *Zelda*?

JH: Is it?

Gf: Of course!

JH: You know, if you like RPGs, then *Zelda* is great. But RPGs are one genre that doesn't have a very wide demographic.

Gf: I think you're underestimating your own product. *Zelda* has a very good reputation.

JH: That's true, it does.

Gf: OK. Moving on, is there a *Donkey Kong Country* game currently in development for the N64?

JH: Yes.

Gf: And would you say it's a 1997 title?

JH: I have no idea.

Gf: Is *DCK64* going to be a cartridge game or a 64DD game?

JH: I don't have any specific knowledge one way or the other at this point. All I know is that it's in development.

Perry Kaplan: I have heard that *DCK64* will be on a 128meg cartridge and not be a 64DD game.

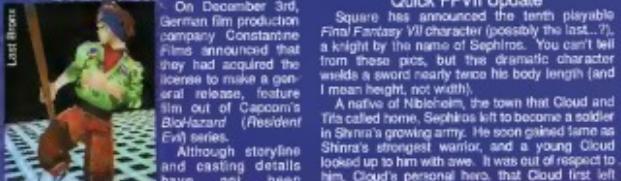
Gf: We've been hearing a lot about Project Arion, Nintendo's long-awaited color portable system lately. What's the deal on that?

(continued next page)

Nintendo to join Shinra's army.

Sephiroth's current whereabouts are unknown... Like Cloud, he seems to have left Shinra's army, but no one's sure what's happened to him since. Although it seems certain that he joins your party eventually, he might not begin (or end) the quest as Cloud's ally.

In other Square news, Square's quest to completely replace standard video game distribution channels has led to the announcement that *Bushido Blade* will be sold only in convenience stores. These pre-ordering *FFVII* at convenience stores will also receive a free strategy guide. Many convenience stores are already running HDTV movies of *FFVII* and other Square products.



64DD "Bulky Drive" Unveiled

Although rumors of the big introduction of the 64DD (also known as the "Bulky Drive") that was supposed to take place at this year's Shoshinkai have been flying since last year's Shoshinkai, the unveiling at Shoshinkai '96 was decidedly understated.

Four prototype 64DDs were at the show, each running one TV of a 4-TV display. A 64DD version of Mario 64 was exhibited to the crowd; the same game as the cartridge, of course, but it served the dual purpose of highlighting the 64DD's speedy loading time (only a few seconds longer than the cartridge) and proving that the hardware was, as Nintendo claimed, basically complete.

The system plugs onto the bottom of the N64 hardware, and can play both games on discs alone, or games on disc and cartridge. Zelda, which we'll get back to later, is said to be packed with both a disc and a standard ROM cartridge. Why Nintendo intends to do this is still unclear, but it's possible that the cartridge will be used to contain much of the game's basic programming, while the 64DD's reported 2-4 (probably the latter) megabytes (coupled with an additional 4 from the N64 itself) will be used to store area specific information: backgrounds, enemies, music, etc. Via this combination, Nintendo could easily release expansion discs with new areas, weapons, enemies, music, etc.

Full one half of the disc's 64 megabytes (512 mebibit) can be made writable, and in this lies the 64DD's biggest distinction over its CD competitors. Nintendo President Yamauchi has been quoted as saying that this is a necessary step in the evolution of the RPG genre, although examples have been nearly non-existent. In Nintendo's Shoshinkai roundtable discussion, the topic came up only briefly, and Mr. Miyamoto's response as to how the feature would be incorporated into Zelda vaguely referred to a world in which semi-permanent environmental changes could occur. An example stated later in the speech was for massive save options in Mario Paint-type games.

Examples in the Nintendo literature refer to more realistic and detailed characters and pets in the newly popular genre of Wonder Project J2-esque "racing" games, the ability to save your performance and study it in racing games (although this ability already exists on other formats), more opportunities for character development in RPGs, and the ability to use new 64DD discs to update sports data in professionally-licensed sports titles.

Future plans include communications hardware that will allow 64DD users to download upgrades, and exchange their custom data with one another. How Nintendo plans to incorporate this is still unknown.

Statistically, the 64DD is, as Nintendo promises, fast. It can transfer an entire 64DD's worth of data in just over a minute (81 seconds), a little over 5 times as fast as a standard double-speed CD-ROM can transfer the same amount of memory. Its seek time is a low .75 milliseconds.

The big question, as always, is "What about the games?" The wide-spread rumor of Zelda being released as a cartridge (or even on cartridge as an option) appears to be untrue. Outside of that, however, Nintendo has officially announced no titles... But unofficially, it's a different matter. In the 12-6 issue of *Famitsu* '96, a Nintendo rep leaked that Super Mario RPG and Fire Emblem sequels are in development for the 64DD, but that they were too early in development to be considered definite. Furthermore, the same Nintendo rep listed Nintendo's impressive-looking Mother 3 as a 64DD title. Unconfirmed rumors of a Mario 64 expansion, and constant speculation about Dragon Quest VII and future Square titles are flying, but little more than the above four titles can be responsibly reported at this time.

Zelda 64



JH: Atlanta was, and is, sort of a research project for us. Of course we're interested in doing a newer handheld somewhere down the line. But right now Game Boy is still selling very well for us. Why would we want to cannibalize that market? Of course, at some point, we will have to replace it, so we're doing a lot of research to make sure it's appropriate. You know: Is it going to have a color screen? Are color screens ready to provide the kind of latency, clarity and battery life that you want to have in a handheld? So that's what Atlanta was about: research, looking at different options and trying to see if the pieces were there to pull together a handheld that we would be happy with.

PK: So you've officially shelved the Atlanta?

JK: Yes.

GF: Is the sequel to Mario 64 planned for a '97 release?

JK: That's really a question for Shigeru Miyamoto. There's always a Mario title in development.

PK: There's nothing we can say that's definitive about the Mario 64 sequel. There are many great products to look forward to in 1997, it's hard to count!

OF: Is there a Metroid game in development for the N64?

PK: You know, I heard there was a really long time ago, but I haven't heard anything that's recent.

JH: Metroid belongs to its creators, R&D 1, with Mr. Mizushima. I don't recall seeing anything on Metroid for N64.

GF: Is there a Kelon bonus game in development for Nintendo 64?

PK: I haven't heard one thing on that game.

GF: Since Eric is not directly releasing any more titles in the U.S., will you be bringing out Wonder Project J2 in America?

JH: Maybe. We have a lot of people over here looking at different titles and there are lots of licenses here that aren't exhibiting. But we don't know if [Wonder Project J2] will ever be released in the States.

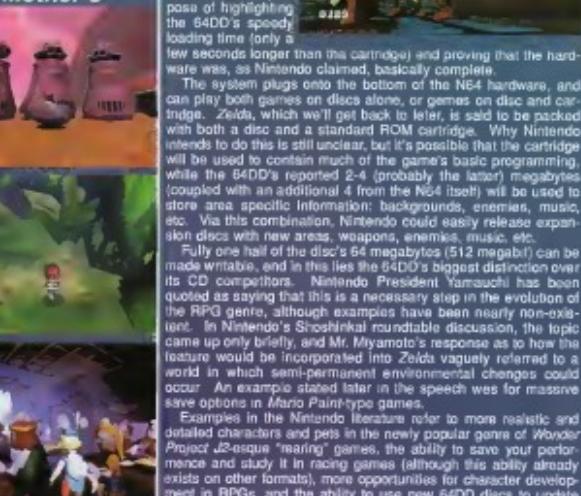
GF: Nomco recently announced in Japan that they are becoming a Nintendo 64 licensee. Is that the same for America?

JH: I expect we will bring them over. However, just because they signed with NCL doesn't mean they are an NCA licensee. But they could choose to do that.

GF: How many games does Nintendo aim to release for the N64 in 1997 in the US?

JH: We really don't know. We're not deadline-driven on any of our games. Our whole focus is on quality, and you can see it in a lot of the games already out there. We're going to take as long as it takes to produce these games, so I can't really tell you how many titles will be available in '97. As many as are ready, really. We have some really great things in the lineup, but if Mr. Miyamoto decides Zelda is going to take another 6 months,

Mother 3



Mother is the name of Nintendo of Japan's quirky, non-violent, and incredibly popular conventional RPG series. *Mother 2* came out here as the little seen and underappreciated *Earthbound*. As fans of that game will surely recall, the *Mother* series has a reputation for pretty poor graphics, which made these stunning shots look all the more impressive. While Nintendo has said almost nothing about the game, these pictures speak volumes: we know it has racing scenes (above), polygon-rendered overhead scenes (middle), and first-person towns full of real time polygonal townsfolk (bottom). A 64DD exclusive, due out late next year.



3rd Party Products

Third party support remains the Nintendo 64's biggest weakness. With only a few exceptions, notably *Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers* and Konami's *Soccer* game, the Nintendo 64's Japanese 3rd party support still lacks in both quantity and quality. With Namco and Capcom both confirmed as 3rd parties, this could begin to change... Let's just hope they're not making more sports and mahjongg games.



Ettae

At this stage in development, Imagineer's *Ettae* has a bit too much pop-up and a hero with triangle feet, but it drew quite a bit of attention as the first (and only, save *Zelda*) action/RPG on the N64's release list.



Dual Heroes

The N64's first 3D-fighting game was shown at the show, but the characters could only do standard punches and kicks. The backgrounds are 2D (so far), but the characters look pretty well modeled.



Goemon 5

Konami's sole action title, this long-awaited title still exists only as development system renders. The game's eccentric nature should make for a great N64 game.



64 Oozumo

Nintendo 64 sumo wrestling! Yes! I can already hear the polygon fat rippling...



Rev Limit

Rev Limit's *Bluray Complete R v. Limit* was probably the best playable 3rd party game at the show... Although the graphics were about par with *Ridge Racer*, the cool weather effects, different seasons, and variety of tracks and cars make *Rev Limit* look very promising.

The Complete List:

Acclaim Japan:

100% (9/97)

Asmik:

Virtual Pro Wrestling (2/97)

Athena:

Pro Matchup Kusawa (1/97)

Banpresto:

Super Robot Spirits (2/97)

Bottoms Up:

64 Oozumo (5/97)

EA Victor:

J-League Live 64 (12/96)

Eriko:

Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers (3/97)

Epoch:

Doragon (3/97)

Game Bank:

Hexen (1/97)

Hudson:

Power League 64 (Unknown)

Dual Heroes (Unknown)

Untitled Pro Wrestling Game (Unknown)

Bomberman 64 (Unknown)

Hagane II (Tentative)

Kanekaido Shonen no Jiken (Unknown)

Human:

Human Grand Prix (12/96)

Imagineer:

Pro Baseball King (12/96)

J-League Dynamite Soccer 64 (2/97)

Mahou Seki Ettae (4/97)

Multi Racing Championship (6/97)

Sim City 2000 (2/97)

Rizine (7/97)

Untitled 3D Fighting Game (?/97)

Japan System Supply:

Chameleon Twist (11/97)

Cavally Battle 3000 (11/97)

Kemco:

Blade & Barrel (12/96)

Koei:

Mahjongg 64 (Unknown)

Konami:

Mahjongg Master (12/96)

J-League Football Soccer (12/96)

Powerful Pro Baseball 4 (Spring/97)

Golf: Goemon '97 (Unknown)

Setsa:

Rev Limit (2/97)

Wild Chopper's (5/97)

Super Real Island (5/97)

St Andrews Golf (11/96)

Thunder Go (1997)

Monta Shogi 64 (5/97)

Tomi:

Macross [Robotech: Crystal Dreams] (5/97)

Victor Interactive:

Mission: Impossible (4/97)

Video System:

Sonic Wings Assault (5/97)

The Mahjongg 64 (Unknown)



Blade & Barrel

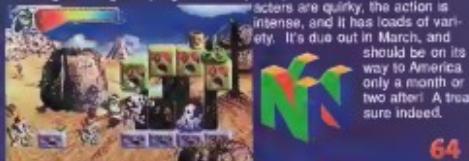
One of the few things Kemco's *B&B* has over *Seta's Wild Chopper* is this cool 4-player battle mode, a la *StarFox*.



Yuke Yuke!! Troublemakers

Our pick for 3rd party game of the show, *Yuke Yuke!! (Go Go!! Troublemakers)* is Eriko's second N64 release, a vertically/horizontally-scrolling 2D/3D game programmed by the gods at Treasure. The characters are quirky, the action is intense, and it has loads of variety.

It's due out in March, and it should be on its way to America only a month or two after! A treasure indeed.



Zelda is going to take another 6 months.

GR: What does EAD stand for?

JH: Entertainment Analysis Division, I think. It's a department of NCL.

GR: And what do they do? Evaluate games?

JH: We use EAD's expertise to analyze games that come in, and then provide feedback. We are kind of forming out that knowledge right now. We put a couple of people at LucasArts to help polish *Shadows of the Empire* during the last few months of development. Nintendo has a wealth of experience producing games and we want to share that as much as possible. You know, try and maximize the utilization of Mr. Miyamoto.

GR: Is it true that Mr. Miyamoto had input on *Shadows of the Empire*?

JH: Yes he did. Quite a bit actually. NCL sent two members of staff there, Mr. Tanabe and Mr. Yamada, and we sent a couple guys from NOA. They were at LucasArts for the past couple of months working with the team, trying to provide some input. It was actually a very good, cooperative relationship. I wouldn't say that they fixed the game, but they did provide some insight into how to do things. You have to keep in mind that *Shadows* is not a Nintendo game, it's not the style of game that Mr. Miyamoto would produce. It was very difficult for him. He was trying to improve a style of game that wasn't his style. There was a still a lot of good ideas brought to the project by EAD.

GR: I have heard that Nintendo has a combo N64 and 64DD in one planned. Is this true?

JH: We haven't really made that determination yet. We haven't even started manufacturing the 6-4DD. If there is a cost-of-goods incentive for us to combine both units into one, then we probably will. Right now, it's just too early to tell. Let's just get the thing out the door first, you know?

GR: That reminds me. What's going on with DMA's *Body Harvest* and *Climber*?

JH: *Climber* is on hold right now. *Body Harvest* is still under development. I don't have any kind of a schedule on it right now.

GR: Does the same apply to Angel Studios' *Buggy Bopple*?

JH: I don't have a release date for BB. But I just got a preview of it about 2 weeks ago...

GR: And how is it?

JH: It looks great. Significantly different from what we saw on the reels of the E3. Actually, I was very impressed. I was surprised by what I saw. I expected that we would probably be very light-headed about BB, because it looks so hot.

GR: One more question. I heard that Steven Spielberg wants to do an N64 game?

PK: Sounds good.

GR: But is it true?

JH: It's difficult to comment on that. We are talking to lots of different companies right now. The launch of N64 has been very successful, and has brought a lot of people to the table.

GR: Is it also true that Steven Spielberg called Nintendo President Howard Lincoln?

PK: It's true. He called and said, "Can I get on N64 for my son, all the stores are sold out."



cally acclaimed games of the genre was *Wonder Project J* for the Super Famicom, in which gamers take the responsibility of educating an impetuous young robot to the world's customs, and ultimately creating a savior capable of saving that world. The robot was a boy, and needless to say, *Wonder Project J* didn't exactly fly off the shelves.

Enix isn't about to make the same mistake twice. The same basic design concept was used in *Wonder Project J2*, but instead of snooty little Pino, this game's robot is a young girl by the name of Josette. She's cute! She's charming! She's bubbly! All of that, mixed with a serious tinge of adventure type games (or, for that matter, games in general) on the N64, has earned *WPJ2* and its fledgling genre a great deal of attention.

Here's the storyline: Gipetto, creator of *WPJ*'s Pino, had just completed Josette when he passed away. His dying words were for her to trust in a mysterious power named [your name here]. Although she can't see you, Josette is aware of a mysterious power watching her, and comes right up to the screen to converse with you. You can't converse directly, but you can guide her with simple yes or no commands sent through her robot friend, Bird. She trusts you completely (pretty much), and so the two of you share the responsibility of saving the continent of Blue Land. It's a cool concept, and if you play *Wonder Project J2* late at night, after having consumed just the right amount of prescription cough syrup, you might actually find yourself believing that there really is a 2D universe in that cartridge that you're going to have to save.

One thing's for sure: characters don't get much cooler than Josette. She's easily the most animated

character in the history of video games, and the luscious, film-quality animation follows her through hundreds of different actions, from kicking cats to dancing with glee to eating her own hands. And she's certainly not lacking in personality. Generally ultra-

happy but occasionally moody, you actually do empathize with Josette as a person when she first comes to understand the concept of death (and bursts into tears), or celebrates any of her many victories at cooking, acting, dancing, whatever. She even runs up to the screen frequently to ask you questions ("Are you handsome? Are you my age? Do you ever feel an unseen presence watching you? Do you ever feel like dancing?"). I love this aspect of the game, though I've got to say that there's something really disconcerting (but cool) about having a video game character ask you if you believe in God...

Things aren't all smiles and happy thoughts in Blue Land. The ruling Silicilian empire becomes more and more corrupt with power as time goes on, and as Josette learns about justice, she has no choice but to rebel against their growing corruption. But, hey, we're getting ahead of ourselves here. When Josette gets off the boat in Blue Land, she lacks the balance skills necessary to walk without falling, has not the social skills necessary to simply greet someone, and has no abilities that can be turned into a source of income. You've got a lot of work to do before the little 0% in the bottom of the screen becomes a 100%, and Josette becomes a complete human being.

Let's say you want Josette to learn how to cook. First, you'll need to have Bird point her to the shop where she can buy a pan, and then make her practice using it. At first she'll try knocking it, carrying it on her head, eating it, that sort of thing... You'll need to hit that green "no" button to reprimand her until she gets it right. When she hits upon it, the blue button gives her the thumbs-up, and she giggles with

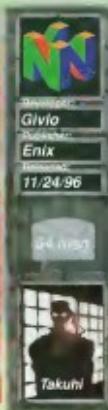


やったあーっ!





The 3D scenes... Cute, but not much fun.



To buy the items necessary for use as teaching examples, you'll have to put Josette to work. Working the mine is ridiculously lucrative... Forget the other five jobs, and sign up for this one as soon as Josette's able.



After learning of "table talk" role playing games, Josette offers to take you on a spoken adventure, where you answer yes or no to the various options, and she acts out the part of your character. Tell me that's not cool.



Josette dreamed of being an actress, and worked hard to get the part. But on the film's opening day, the Siliceman Empire labels the film as "subversive," and arrests the director. Although this aspect of the storyline is slow to develop, it's incredibly important... It won't be long before sweet Josette has to fight for the values you've taught her.

delight. Now buy her a book on cooking, show her to the stove, and have her practice. Now she can cook... sort of... but the food she prepares at her restaurant job causes her boss to vomit. A bad sign. It appears Josette does not yet understand taste, so you must make her eat various spices until she can get that concept down. Once she masters it, she's 4% closer to being a real person.

Why do a side view "communication adventure" on the Nintendo 64? The obvious reason seems to be the anime... A Josette with that many frames would take a lot of loading off of a CD. Enix also claims that the 64-bit processor allows her a very complicated artificial intelligence program, but she doesn't behave fundamentally different from the way Pino did in the 16-bit original. Other than that, the N64 is used to create a number of dreadful 3D scenes the game would be better off without. These slow and violently letterboxed scenes are fun at first, but having to search for items in the landmark-free underwater and underground scenes is tedious and incredibly frustrating.

Wonder Project J2 has a few other problems. Too many of the problems are simply solved by having Josette buy a product and practice with it at home, as if the producers couldn't think of enough real puzzles. And when you're stuck in this game, you're completely screwed. My Josette is 80% human, but there's no one left in the town to talk to and absolutely no indication of what needs to be done next to pick up those last 20 percentage points. I do respect the game's non-linear approach — you can learn things in virtually any order, but this is a problem that needs to be corrected.

In the end, I did enjoy Wonder Project J2 immensely. Not because the quest was particularly well done, but for the sheer novelty of it and, most of all, because of Josette. I almost feel guilty for abandoning her in that 80% finished cartridge, and I can't help but turn it on and visit with her once in a while. Sure, go ahead and mock me. I understand. But if J2 ever comes out here (Enix passed, but Nintendo's looking into it) I know that you'll come to feel the same. ■



JAPAN NOW

The Japanese print advertising campaign for *Arc the Lad II* is as follows: a 2-page spread with some dramatic image in the background, and smack-dab in the center is one single line of promotional text, in English... "Arc the Lad II Isn't Arc the Lad." But... why? Why would Sony spend hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to convince Japanese consumers that *Arc the Lad II* is totally unlike *Arc the Lad*, the best-selling game in Sony history and the #2 selling PlayStation title of all time (although it may have been passed up by *Bio Hazard* by now)? Sure, *Arc I* was ridiculously short, completely linear, and overly simplistic. But were gamers that disappointed by it?

Well, one thing's for sure: No one can accuse Sony of false advertising. Though *Arc II* is an excellent sequel in terms of cleaning up, clarifying, and intensifying *Arc I*'s storyline, it's a very different game. *Arc II* excels in length,



substance, storyline, and complexity – all the areas in which the original lagged. Even more drastic is the change in genre: *Arc I* was a simple fantasy-based strategy game, but

its sequel is a true RPG complete with shops, overworld maps, massive towns, non-linear elements, and an epic quest that dwarfs the original's by far.

The hero this time around is Elk, one of



a number of children born with magical powers that was abducted by his country's corrupt government and experimented upon. Now free (though afflicted with amnesia), he's working as a bounty hunter, until one of his jobs forces him to cross paths with his past tormentors.

Meanwhile, Arc and his crew are viewed in Elk's country as vile terrorists from another land, an interesting plot twist that pits *Arc I*'s hero and *Arc II*'s hero on opposite sides of the fence. Eventually, of course, they team up, and you end up with a grand total of 14 characters at your disposal... Plus one or two hidden ones, and whatever monsters Elk's companion Liza can lure over to your side.

The storyline is incredibly well done. Arc's fascinating semi-future, semi-past universe that we saw so precious little of in *Arc I* is now exploited to its full potential, and gives rise to both the involving X-Files-esque plot and a number of intricate subplots. You also have to give them credit for actually making an actual sequel for once... It's not one of those "1,000 years later" deals that seem to infect every major RPG series.

Arc's world is huge and diverse, and the game is easily 2 or 3





times longer than the original. The endless string of large, strategic battle maps is over. *Arc II* has real dungeons, huge towns, and somewhat complex mazes, all filled with an endless string of small scale battles. Although I enjoy the RPG emphasis this time around, the limited number of characters you can use in each battle (only 5) cuts into what little strategy *Arc I* actually had. The producers were probably trying to save memory by reducing the number of characters, and in return, the new characters have incredible animation, more voice samples, and more attack patterns than their *Arc I* counterparts (who remain basically unchanged in *Arc II*). They can also use a variety of different weapons (all of which can be leveled up a number of times), now purchasable at the shops that are new to *Arc II*. The added sounds and animation are certainly nice, but the battles do become a bit tedious this time around, especially when you're forced to fight the same one twice in a row if you accidentally backtrack too far.

In terms of background graphics, *Arc II* rarely exceeds *Arc I* in terms of quality. But in terms of quantity, there's no comparison: *Arc II* probably has over ten times as many screens as its predecessor. Musically, I was slightly disappointed that *Arc II* reused so much of *Arc I*'s music: Of the new music, some is quite good, but most of it lacks the impact of the original.

Arc II is certainly not without its faults, but the way G-Craft managed to completely repair every major flaw of the original is very impressive. Though the slogan may not be so catchy, *Arc the Lad II* really *isn't Arc the Lad*. *Arc I* was a graphical and aural masterpiece, but completely lacking in substance. *Arc II* was made with the hopes of putting that reputation behind it, and achieving a place among such PlayStation fantasy-RPG classics as *Sukkiri*, *Final Fantasy VII*, and *Wild Arms* (hopefully). And at that, it's an unqualified success. **T**



G-Craft

SCEJ

11/01/96





LUNAR SILVER STAR STORY

GameArt's, it seems, was never really satisfied with the *Sega-CD Lunar*. Anyone who's seen the original design sketches, and heard all of the early hype the game generated would probably agree that, masterpiece though it may have been, *Lunar* never lived up to its full potential. But now the game has experienced a rebirth (considering how drastically different it really is, the word "remake" seems unable to do it justice), a new attempt for GameArt's to tell the story they were trying to tell the first time around, this time with 32-bit graphics, generous helpings of animation, a new soundtrack, and a storyline far deeper than the nicely surface-scratching original. Though the basic storyline, systems, characters and locations are the same, *Lunar* is a completely new game, just as fun for fans of the original (if not more so) as it is for first time gamers.

In fact, *Lunar: Silver Star Story* seems to be designed specifically to appeal to the fans of its predecessor, *Lunar: The Silver Star*. The game delights in trying to trick you into thinking it's following the path of the original, and then pulling a last minute 180-degree turn. In the original, do you remember the touching, dramatic scene in which Alex and crew prepare to board the boat to Merilia, and Luma announces that she's decided to return alone to Burg? The same thing happens in *Silver Star Story*, except this time, as the boat pulls away, Luma jumps aboard at the last minute, grabbing Alex' outstretched hand. It's an even more dramatic moment, and a relatively drastic change in the storyline.

The game is full of drastic changes. Nearly every dungeon in *Silver Star Story* is drastically changed from the original, or brand new. Most of the duller dungeons from *Lunar* have been scrapped entirely. All the towns are pretty much the same, but their events play out much differently. And the characters, which were hollow shells with only traces of personality in the original, are now as fully realized and complex as the characters in *Eternal Blue*. The battles and enemies have been completely redrawn, and most of the





spells are new, although there are fewer than there were in the original. Finally, the game's cast of villains has been increased by two.

The game's 35 minutes of animation (all of it incredibly high quality) is astounding. Although only half screen, the FMV is clear and clean; and the frame rate is obscenely high. Clearly, GameArts plunked a lot of money into this one. The music is good, and 100% new, with virtually no connection to the original. The style of quiet, simple and elegant compositions differ sharply from *Eternal Blue*'s dramatic, brassy, big band feel... As *Silver Star Story* shows, *Lunar* composer Naruyuki Iwadare is clearly talented at both.

While the battle backgrounds and enemy animation are quite impressive, JAM (the game's actual programmers) could have put much more work in the graphics, which range widely from the impressive

water and fire effects in the later dungeons to the straight-out-of-16-bit looking towns and overhead maps. Also, the loading time before battles is slightly annoying... Nowhere near as bad as it was in, say, *Albert Odyssey Garden*, but I've seen better. I like that all random encounters on the main world map have been removed, but the concept of being able to see your enemies doesn't quite work as well as it should... The enemies are too fast, and too difficult to evade.

Still, a few annoyances aside, *Silver Star Story* is finally the epic it always should have been. If you're a *Lunar* fan, this is a version you must experience. And for those new to the series, if the concept of old fashioned-style RPGs with an unprecedented emphasis on storyline, character development and high drama appeals to you, there's no better introduction to the world of *Lunar*.



UP-TO-THE-MINUTE MANIAH



STREET FIGHTER III NEW GENERATION



Capcom has finally released the first official SFW screenshots, along with a smattering of information about the game. First we'll discuss the game system. The biggest addition is called "Blocking." If you're wondering what I'm talking about, let me give you a little background: In Japan, blocking is known as "Guarding." Therefore, a technique called Blocking actually sounds original to Japanese. At any rate, Blocking blows the opponent's attack back and sometimes leaves them open for a counterattack. No word yet on how Blocking is done. Each character has three Super Arts, which are selected before the match. Apparently, you can only select one Super Art to use, and its number, either "1," "3," or "B," is displayed above your life bar. NightWarrior-style dashing is now possible and there is no word yet on the combo system. The name of one new character, the female ninja, was revealed as well: Ibuki. Let's recap everything we know about SFW:

- The game's official title is *Street Fighter III: New Generation* and runs on Capcom's new CD-based CPSII 2-D hardware.

- Ten selectable characters: Ryu, Ken, Yun and his brother (?) (kung-fu masters), Ibuki (a female ninja), Alex (a scarred white man), Dudley (a black boxer), Sean (another Shokusan hero), Elena (a black girl), an emaciated freak, and an electrified dude. No word yet on bosses.

- The backgrounds shown include Japanese hot springs, a cave, a Hong Kong street, a rustic village, a subway, a London street, a bridge overlooking a quaint Japanese town, a graffiti wall and a Chinese-style fighting arena.

- In addition to life and super bars, there is a mystery bar under the life bars. This may be a dizzy bar.

- Dashing is now possible.

- Backgrounds scroll vertically as well as horizontally.

- When you perform a Super Art, the backgrounds momentarily change into warping, color-cycling insanity as in "Red Earth Wizard."

- Ryu has two new supers: Shin Shoryuken, or True Shoryuken, and Raikin Hadoken, or Lightning Blade Hadoken.

- Ken has one new super: Shippu Jinrai Kyaku, or Gale Lightning Kick.



The current rumor is that SFW is due in February/March, but we'll keep you updated!



Can the Street Fighter series rewrite video game history again?



TEKKEN 3

Nemco has finally released the first official Tekken 3 information, and it's amazing! The storyline takes place 19 years after Tekken 2. Apparently, Jun Kazama won the King of Iron Fist 2 tournament, and, in the process, was somehow impregnated by Devil Kazuya. Er... No, I guess I don't really want to know what happened. Immaculate conception or not, Jun gives birth to Kazuya's son, who she names Jin. His grandfather, Heihachi, realizes that a mysterious, living power called "Takini" or "Fighting God" exists in Jin, and when Jin turns 15 he begins to train him. Four years later, The King of Iron Fist Tournament 3 is called, and the 19-year-old Jin enters.

Since Tekken 3 takes place nearly two decades after 2, all of the returning characters are extremely old. For instance, Paul Phoenix is now 46, Lei Wulong is 45, Law is 46, and King is 51. Evidently, these five characters plus the seemingly ageless Yoshimitsu are the only characters to return... all the rest will be new. Gameplay details are non-existent, but from these shots we can infer that some stages have actual walls. Fighting Vipers-style. There's still no word on the hardware, other than that it's definitely not System 11 either, but rumors point to an upgraded version of System 11 called System 12. We'll have more Tekken 3 information as it becomes available!



FROM A CAVE DEEP INSIDE AGOURA...



The PostMaster

Loyal PostMaster readers may notice that my column is just a little easy-peasy smug and smatter than it was last month. Consider the powers that be decided that "the readers" don't want to listen to a deformed public service ad for 80 words about how he had to eat water buffalo dung to survive in "Nom. Nom." These "readers" want to see pictures of something called "The Strangelighter" and "Tekkio" or some such nonsense. More of those new-fangled fighting games, I gather. In my heart, there's only room for that Genesis masterpiece, *Bustopia*. Anyway, on to our two lucky letter writers:

I've never actually written any magazine before, so I chose my first one to be for the coolest mag in town.

- 1) There are a lot of P.O.D.'s gamers in this universe since the release of *Destructo Derby 2*. The cost is cool, don't get me wrong, but not as good as the first. Why, you ask, would I say that? Three words: NO LINK MODE. Why on Earth was this left out?
- 2) I own an import PlayStation (yes, I paid a fortune for it) and I would like to know if *Tomb Raider*, *Pandemonium*, *2Xtreme*, and other cool American games will ever make it overseas? Believe never thought anyone would ever ask that! I know *Cross Randomic* is on its way, but I already have 100% complete. Oh well.
- 3) Your mag has the best import game coverage, any chance you can expand on that?
- 4) That N64 has left a bad taste in my mouth. I smell Juggernaut and NeoGeo carts in the future. A cart and floppy disk system is, in my opinion, a joke. *Wave Race* is an exceptional game, but *Mario*, *Gretzky*, and *Gold* are hardly worth seeing a job. Sorry Nintendo, but Sony and Sega have the right idea. Even the inevitable M2 was smart enough to choose CD for a format.
- 5) Finally, I have noticed a large lack of new *Sonic* titles. Who is that? Sega has a great system, they seem more hot titled, and I don't mean more Sony head-nods. I hope Saturn does better, it's better competition for Sony. Reason being, other companies makes better games. If Saturn fails, who will Sony compete with? Nintendo? Ha ha! *Odeon*? *AK Trilogy* really scares me. Heh heh. Sorry, didn't mean to open any N64 wounds.

Deejay, TX

1) I have bad news: "Link made is 'DEAD'." It's not just DO2, all of us here were shocked that Raga Razors had "NO" link-up. Who's that all about? Since Namco started the whole link-up thing, it's probably them when they abandon it, everyone else will too. That just won't encourage people who used it, compare say, *PTW*.

2) I always look forward for me to watch American games get twisted when they're exported overseas the Atlantic. *Cross Randomic* has a new render for ads and start the music cult, and a bit more decapitated looking now, and the Japanese version has totally new music. The Japanese art for *Tomb Raider*, which is Tomb Raiders in Japan, is absolutely BAD. I guess we're retaliating against them for screwing up so much of the art in their games. *Lari* has been re-rendered in all of the game's CD, Inc. *2Xtreme* and *Pandemonium* are both on their way, too, but I haven't heard about any changes.

3) Yeah, sure, they can take this game! Leave me with NOTHING! Those ruthless! Next thing you know I'll be stuck with, like, two sentences worth of a column down in the small print on page 1, after the copyright notices and subscription information. I deserve better! I'm a veteran! I fought the Kaiser and all of his Jerrries in the BIG ONE, pell! I had to eat my own horse just TO SURVIVE!

4) Well, if sales receipts are any indication, you're definitely in the minority opinion there.

5) Wow, you can start a charity organization: "PlayStation Owners for Sega." While I think Midway's perfectly capable of providing Sony some tough competition, I otherwise completely agree... I love people who write in to say "SONY ROCKS! THEY'LL CRUSH SEGA LIKE THEY'RE BUGS AND CONQUER THE WORLD! HA HA HA!" And then they'll jack up prices, crash the unproductive niche genres, and never upgrade their herd-

were. If we didn't have such heated competition in the game industry, we'd all still be paying \$799 for 3DOs.

Dear PostMaster insistor person, I saw the last paragraph in Postmaster, 12/96 issue, when you said "A brief note to readers: it's not that I only publish letters about RPGs and *Seiken Densetsu*, it's that that's all I GET."

Well, Postie, I got news for you! I HATE RPGs! THEY SUCK AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS! The major reason I despise RPGs is the fact that when you encounter an enemy, one always has to do all these commands in a letter set-up sequence. One major reason I like *Zelda* is the fact that the player is in direct contact with the enemy; no little spell-casting sessions to go into, just see it and kill it. And if one really thinks about all games, aren't you always playing the role of a character, whether it's a fighter or magician or robot or race car driver, etc? Thank people, THINK! What's the purpose of moving little people across and up and down a screen only have to go into a totally boring scene to defeat as enemy? Does anyone comprehend what I'm saying?

Chris Jones
Flossmore, IL
P.S. Why are the PlayStation and Super Famicom sometimes abbreviated as PS-X and SFC?

Sigh... that's the last time I try to start any controversy. That letter drew the typical Postmaster response of 8 billion people "for" RPGs, and only Chris here "against". The Sailor Moon side drew about 30 billion trillion zillion letters for the show (including Chris, sorry I had to edit that part), and none "against".

So here's my question... Are we all *insists*? All of us? I mean, Sailor Moon got canceled because the conventional wisdom is that most people hate "all that big eye Japanese stuff." And RPGs never came out here because they say that Americans just can't stand slower paced games. But RPGs and Sailor Moon seem to be just about all the Postmasters care about! So, what's wrong with all of us? I mean, I took a slug in the pre-frontal lobe when I was fighting *Reb* my country down in Gettysburg, but what's your excuse? You're all *deviants*! Deviants!

And, when Sony was considering first releasing the PlayStation, they thought that carts made it sound too much like a toy, so they were going to call it PS-X. Even though they decided against it, it stuck. And SFC = Super Family Computer.

Welcome to the PostMaster! I'll sum it off PostMaster!

The PostMaster
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Capcom's 1997 arcade line-up.

First, the game that everyone's been waiting for: *Street Fighters: The New Generation*, which you can read about in our last-minute update. Next up is *Darkstalkers 3*, which will debut at the February AOU show in Japan. *Hanzo and Donovan* (in his current form) have been taken out of the sequel, but there will be at least two new characters. *DS3* will not use Capcom's new CPSIII hardware but the old, cost efficient CPSII.

Square to make their own hardware?

Sources at Square of Japan have leaked some major info that will blow your mind!! At the Shoshinkai

last month a friend of mine from Square was talking to me about the problems that Matsushita has been having with the M2. Well, the first problem is that the machine does not meet the projected specs of 1 million polygons at 60 frames, 250,000 at 60 frames with all features closer to the truth. He also told me that the same team who designed the M2 is almost finished on another piece of hardware! This machine is still not scheduled to be finished for another 6 months, but it's supposed to be better than both the M2 and Neo64! This machine will be able to pump out 500,000 at 60 frames with all features, but that's not all. Apparently, Square is considering producing all their games exclusively for this new hardware! I know this sounds ludicrous, but my source is very tight with the president of Square! Don't be surprised if you see this machine at the end of 1997 with the Square label on it!!

Mortal Kombat 4 Update

Well, the most noticeable change in the schedule is that *MK4* will not be released in April as previously suggested. The date has been pushed back to June of 1997 to coincide with the sequel to the *MK* movie. There are now 3 different levels of combos: air juggles, simple combos (short combos), and professional combos. Ed Boon told me that *MK4* will not feature any of *MK*'s trademark cartoon finishing moves (Fatalities, Babalities, etc.) because he wanted the game to be much darker and scarier. *MK4* uses new hardware, and the characters see all displayed in real-time 3D, with approximately 2,800 to 3,800 polygons used per character per sec-

ond at 60 frames! The only four characters returning from previous *MK*s are Raiden, Scorpion, Sub-Zero, and Liu Kang. The rest of the cast (which consists of 12 playable characters right now), is being made up of entirely new fighters. All of the backgrounds are now in real-time 3D, with no ring-cuts, and you'll recognize some of the old *MK* arenas, such as Goro's Lair. *MK4* is currently about 30% to 40% complete, and we should see home versions sometime in 1997 or 1998.

Crystal Dynamics, still making games?

Yes it's true. CD has a few games planned for 1997 and they are both sequels: *Gex 2* and *Pandemonium 2*. *Gex 2* will be a real-time 3D adventure like *Mario 64*, while nothing is known about *Pandemonium 2* yet. Both titles are exclusively for PlayStation, and should appear sometime in 1997.

Kemco's Top Gear Rally

Top Gear Rally is currently about 50% complete as we speak. The game has 7 to 8 different tracks with around 10 different vehicles to choose from (including one secret car that can be accessed through a code). There's also a 2-player mode that runs at the same frame rate as the single player game, 30fps. We should have actual shots of *Top Gear Rally* in the March issue of GameFan, and if possible we'll be bringing you an interview with BMG, the designers of the game. *TGR* will be finished sometime in the 2nd quarter of 1997.

UNTIL NEXT TIME...



WE ARE YOU SPARING AT? NO, SORRY, THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF EUROPA, THAT'S MEANT I'M THE BURNER, AND MEANT I SAY GOES, LIGHT!

YOU'RE MY PAL!

As mentioned last issue, one of the big concerns for UK Nintendo fans awaiting the N64's launch on March 1st is how well the games will be adapted to work on the PAL TV system. On the Super NES, British games had to endure shoddy conversions that not only can slow down their US and Japanese counterparts, but also had large black borders at the top and bottom of the screen. Ugh.

Fortunately, however, advance word is good. The Games, Nintendo's UK distributor, recently received their first test machines and an early PAL version of *Super Mario 64*. And not only has the game been optimized so that it runs at almost exactly the same speed as the US version, the infamous borders, although still present, are less than half the size of the Super NES ones, i.e. barely noticeable. And rumor has it that the *PilotWings 64* conversion is equally impressive. Like *SM64* the game speed is almost identical to the NTSC versions, and although it is said to have slightly larger borders, the viewfield has been widened to create a 'Cinemascope'-style effect.

Incidentally, you might be interested to know that UK Super NES games, when put through a suitable game converter, run faster on US systems. And the same is likely to be true of N64 games. Hmmm, anyone fancy a hyper-speed *Mario 64*...?

TERRA-FIE!

Compared to the Super NES market in the US, the UK and European markets are very small. So small, in fact, that Squaresoft didn't even bother converting



Super Mario RPG on the PAL TV system. Buh. However, at long last, we're getting a game that you won't. Ha! Called *Terranigma*, the game was originally published in Japan some months ago by Enix, and created by Quintet, the legendary company who brought us *SoulFooter* and *Actriller*.

As you might guess, it's an RPG which looks and feels very similar to Quintet's excellent *Illusion Of Giin*, its predecessor in Quintet's world-creating action/RPG series. The player assumes the role of a mischievous lad who, after opening a forbidden door, discovers that his own world is situated in the Earth's interior, and that an evil force has frozen the entire population of the planet above. Now it's up to the player to challenge the forces of darkness and restore human life to its former glory.

Given the game's pedigree, it's no surprise that *Terranigma* is a superb game, full of action, intrigue, and wonderful graphics. If you're an RPG nut with a converter, then you should seek this out at your local game importer right now.



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RE-LOADED

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MEGA MAN 8



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MAJOR DAMAGE

THE DIVIDE

ADVENTURE:

TAIL OF THE SUN

ROLE PLAYING:

ARC THE LAD

SUKOON



RACING:

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SHOOTING:

TENKA

X2

CRIME WAVE

STRATEGY:

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SPORTS:

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JIMMY JOHNSON

MADDEN '97

GAMEDAY '97

FIGHTING:

CLAY FIGHTER 3

WAR GODS

PSYCHIC FORCE

DOMESTIC SATURN:

JAN-FEB.

ACTION:

MEGA MAN R

INCREDIBLE HULK

MAJOR DAMAGE

DRAGONHEART

AMOK

SPOT



ACT. ROLE PLAYING:

DARK SAVIOR

ROLE PLAYING:

MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH

SHOOTING:

BLACK DAWN

POWERSLAVE

RACING:

HARDCORE 4X4

SCORCHER



STRATEGY:

COMMAND AND CONQUER

SPORTS:

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DOMESTIC NINTENDO 64:

MADDEN '97

SPACE JAM

JAN-FEB.

ACTION:

TURON: DINOSAUR HUNTER

BLAST OZER

SHOOTING:

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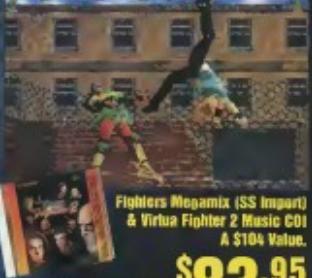
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WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

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BREAKZ	PUNCH ...S	SPRAYC	TURBO....V
STOMPT	STAND....R	PRESSE	DREAM...O
CLUSH....I	SCREEF...H	SLANT....L	CHASE....P

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